

OUR PHIL AND OTHER STORIES

BY

KATHARINE FLOYD DANA



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"In his trim new uniform." Page 43.

OUR PHIL AND OTHER STORIES

BY

KATHARINE FLOYD DANA

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

E. W. KEMBLE



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PREFACE.

IN this little volume are three short stories, sketches of negro character, published in the "Atlantic Monthly" some fifteen or more years ago under the assumed name of Olive A. Wadsworth. The author's real name is now given on the title-page. She died in April, 1886, after many years of sickness, during which, like so many other gifted women, she found relief and pleasure in the use of her pen. With a sensitive nature, a high ideal, and a consequent distrust of her own work, she was peculiarly reluctant that any one should recognize her literary ventures. A first attempt was the publication of some articles in "Hunt's Merchants' Magazine" which were signed "O. A. W.," meaning "Only a Woman." That conceit did not long conceal her identity, and being com-

pelled to give up the initials, but not wishing to wholly abandon the original device, she adopted the form subsequently used, feeling that a signature wearing no apparent mystery would be least likely to excite inquiry. This cover proved for a long time successful, and under that name several books, many verses, chiefly for children, and numerous magazine articles were published. Among the latter were these sketches, which are now reproduced in more permanent form in response to frequent requests, and with the belief that they possess merit which will not only make the book a joy to her wide circle of warmly attached friends, but a pleasure to the reading public.

W. B. D.

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OUR PHIL.



OUR PHIL was blacker than the ace of spades. He was the blackest darky that ever was born. Jet, huckleberries, charcoal, ebony, and crows were nothing to him.

On the old place at home it was considered quite a point to be black ; if you could not be a "latter," or a mulatto, as you precise Northerners would say, why then, the next best thing was to be dead-black.

All of Phil's people were black. Aunt Dolly, his mother, who cooked at the "house" for twenty-five years, used to almost put the fire out when she looked into it ; Uncle Pete, his father, and Sam, Cæsar, Hagar, and Ann, his brothers and sisters, were every one as black as Egypt.

After nearly a quarter of a century, Aunt Dolly began to fail a little in her cooking ; she forgot the salt in the corn-cakes one day, and let the pot-pie burn the next.

"That will never do, Dolly," said my mother.

"Awful sorry, mistis," replied Aunt Dolly, penitently.

"You are not so young as you were, and you must not try to do so much. We will get some one in to help you ; who shall it be, Dolly ?"

"There 's Jupe's Clarsy," said Aunt Dolly, after a minute's thought, "she 's a likely gal ; quite spry, I heerd, mistis, quite spry, since she come back."

"Very well, you shall have her, then."

This likely girl of Jupiter's, Clarissa by name, had recently come back to her father. She scarcely deserved the name of girl, for she was on the sensible side of thirty, and was a widow, or as much of one as a woman can be who does not know whether her husband is dead or alive. Her Jacob, a man twenty years older than herself, had gone away to sea five years before, and she had never seen or heard of him since. After wandering about from

place to place at service, she had finally come home again, and now she was to be installed as helper to Aunt Dolly.

These people were not slaves, but had been. Long before that eventful hour when the great public Proclamation of Freedom broke every bond in the land with one blow, the process of emancipation had been going on slowly but very surely in those sections of the South that bordered on the Northern States. Liberty cannot keep itself to itself. It was, in those old times, like a pear-tree planted near the boundary line of your garden; its shade, its fragrance, its leaves, and a goodly portion of its fruit, would fall over on the other side. So the desire to be free and to set free, the love of liberty in its fullest and widest sense, had crept down silently into many a plantation and old estate in Kentucky, Virginia, and along our Maryland coast.

How any one could ever oppress the weak, oppose the right, uphold the wrong, or stoop to any meanness or dishonor, in the face of the everlasting sea, I cannot understand. The boundless, restless, mysterious world of waters seems to link us closer to God than any other of his works.

It utters his voice in tempest, and mirrors his heavens in calm. Its solemn booming at dead of night, like an accusing voice that protests against wrong and condemns the doer, might set a man crazy if he had guilt on his soul. And its laughing ripples on a spring morning, foaming and bubbling up the beach, while the water beyond is smooth as crystal and clear as the sea of glass in the vision of St. John, ought to persuade him to all goodness, faith, and mercy.

However all this may be, our negroes were free. My grandfather Calvert could never quite bring himself to take the step of freeing them, but the first act of my father when the estate came into his hands was to carry out this long desired purpose. That was before I was born, and more than a dozen years anterior to the memorable day when Aunt Dolly burned the pot-pie, and was furnished with an assistant in consequence.

Clarsy turned out to be a very likely girl indeed, and before she had worked in the kitchen a year our Phil fell in love with her. I always heard the gossip of the place from Phil's sister, Black Ann, so

called in opposition to 'Latter Ann, who sometimes did the extra laundry work. Black Ann was house - worker, and was the strangest mixture of good and bad, of shrewd and silly, that ever grew up on the old place. One minute she seemed gentle and conscientious ; the next



hard as granite and utterly reprobate ; one hour she would tell you horrible lies, and the next come and confess them to you without a particle of penitence ; and in all my life I never saw her shed a tear. If anything disturbed or agitated her very much, she would give a loud, defiant sniff, and wipe her mouth hard with her apron.

I was coming down-stairs one day when Black Ann was washing the woodwork.

She caught my feet in her hands as I went to pass, exclaiming : " Bless your little feet, Miss Cathy ! ain't no bigger than corn-cobs ! "

" Don't, Anny," I replied, with as much dignity as a child of twelve could assume ; " I don't like to have you touch my feet ! "

" Don't, eh ? Must let 'em go, then. "

" And I don't like to be called Miss Cathy, either. Cathy is such a horrid name ! "

" What then ? Can't say ' Miss Kitty,' 'cause that's the mistis's name, and then we'd have to call her ' Old Miss Kitty,' and that's no manners. "

" You can call me Miss Kate. "

" Hi ! " she said, with a laugh, " that will do for the quality ! Reg'lar quality name ! don't come nat'ral to a poor darky like me. "

It always made me feel bad to hear Anny call herself a poor darky, so I said : " Well, I don't care, Anny, you can say Cathy if you like, although it is ugly. "

" Lor bless you ! 't ain't ugly a mite ! It's sweet as 'lasses ! It's sweet as you be ! Now I'll tell you something, 'cause you're so good. Phil wants to marry Clarsy ! "

"Does he?"

"Yes ; but he can't do it!"

"Why not?"

"Got one husband already."

"Why, no, Anny, she's a widow."

"Only 'bout half, Miss Cathy. They got to wait a year, anyhow ; law ain't up till after seven years."

"Why, Anny, widows don't have to wait till their husbands have been dead seven years."

"Massy, no ! not if they're stone-dead ; then you can get married next morning ; but if you ain't sartain sure, got to wait seven years, for fear he'll come back."

"That seems stupid, because he could come back in seven years and a day or a week."

"Don't know noffink 'bout that, Miss Cathy, only what I heerd 'em tell, that the law was up next year."

I troubled my head but little about the law, although I regretted very much that the fun of a wedding, with all its attendant good things, should be put off for a whole year ; and I felt still worse when I heard through Anny, from time to time, that poor Phil was half sick with anxiety and

fear, lest Clarsy's "Old Jake" should come back before the year was out.

"He can't think of noffink else, Miss Cathy," she said, one day. "Dreams of him every night, he says ; thinks he sees him swimming ashore, or putting up to the dock, and he goes into cold sweats and nightmares. What's got hold of him to think so much of that Clarsy, I can't see ! If old Jake comes back, let him take her, I say, and clar ! No loss ! She can cook pretty smart, but, lor ! any poor darky can cook ! But then she's a good color, too, Clarsy is ; none of your half-way niggers !"

Clarsy was black as a coal, too.

"I'm very sorry for Phil," said I, "but I think it will all come out right, Anny."

"So I tell him, Miss Cathy. More gals than Clarsy in the world, and better ones, too ! But, massy me ! when a man gits his mind sot onto a gal, it's just as if the handle was off the coffee-mill ; can't turn him, nohow !"

But in spite of Phil's nightmare and terror, and Clarsy's feeble apprehension lest she might lose the wedding-cake, the ring, and the party, the year went round, the

"law was up," and the marriage-day appointed. Mr. Scott, our minister, was to drive down and perform the ceremony, and remain with us over night ; which he frequently did, as his house was seven miles away. All the people about were invited, and even two or three of Clarsy's relations were coming all the way down from the city to grace the occasion. Mother always took great pains to make our people happy, especially on their holidays and festivals, and wonderful preparations were made for the wedding. Clarsy took a journey to the city, expressly to buy her dress ; but if she had gone to Europe on purpose she could not have found anything uglier. It was the most dismal shade of lead-colored alpaca, striped with black, gloomy enough to make you shed tears ; but she thought it was beautiful, and Aunt Dolly commended her for buying goods that would "do sarvice." There were whole ovens full of cake and biscuit baked, and mother frosted the bride's loaf and put sugar-plums in the icing. The kitchen and back kitchen were newly whitewashed, and the great brick jambs painted black. At last everything was ready ; the day arrived ; the

shelves in the big milk-room fairly sagged with their burden of roast and boiled, and broiled and baked ; dozens of long benches were brought in from the little meeting-house in the woods to accommodate the guests ; the floors were sanded, the candles lit, and by dusk the people began to gather. The hour arrived, but Mr. Scott had not come. Everything was ready, everybody waiting, time slipping by, and still no Mr. Scott. The darkies were seated in closely packed rows on the benches, keeping solemn silence in expectation of the minister's coming ; 'Lias, the fiddler, and the two "banjo-pickers," being very much in the foreground, and quite conspicuous, kept tuning up their instruments to relieve their embarrassment ; while the poor bride and groom, martyrs to etiquette, stood patiently all this time in the dark in the milk-room, with nothing but the smell of the refreshments to keep their spirits up while waiting their long delayed summons.

My father was sitting lazily by the blazing fire in the dining-room, reading contentedly in the easiest of arm-chairs.

"Leonard," said my mother, "it is half

an hour past the time, and outdoors it is dark, and raining a little ; I'm afraid Mr. Scott won't come."

"I dare say not," said father, carelessly.

"But what will they do?"

"Oh, let them wait till to-morrow night."

"Now, Leonard, you know that's impossible! Think of all the people, and how far some of them have come! Besides, the cake and biscuits will be dry, and the syllabub spoiled! Suppose you marry them, dear; you are a judge, and you know you married a couple once."

"I? Pshaw! pshaw! Let them jump over a broomstick! I can't do it!"

"Now, Leonard," she answered, reprovingly, "you must not speak in that trifling way. Marriage is a very solemn thing, not to be made fun of. Come, now, you marry them, dear; they will all be so disappointed otherwise; won't you?"

"Well, well, if I must, I must. I suppose I can tie them tight enough! Give us the book then!" and he rose reluctantly, and stretched out his hand for the prayer-book.

"But you won't do it in that shooting-jacket, dear."

“ Why not ? ”

“ Nor in those red slippers, with that wicked-looking fox-head on them ! ”

“ What ’s the matter with the slippers ? ” he said, turning them sideways and looking intently at them.

“ Of course you ’ll put on your boots and your dress-suit.”

“ Will I ? ”

“ Certainly, dear ; you would n’t look dignified enough, otherwise.”

“ Well, if you say so, it must be done ! Bless me ! I dare n’t, though ! I ’m afraid I ’ll have to salute the bride ! ”

“ Never fear. Hurry now, it is so late, dear.”

Father loved dearly to tease mother a little with his nonsense, but he was at heart as good as gold and as sweet as honey. Presently he appeared in his black clothes and white cravat, looking as grand and handsome as a prince, I thought. He gave us children a comical wink as we followed him to the kitchen, that set us all laughing ; but mother held up her finger at us, and we knew we must be quiet then.

Phil had on a huge white vest ; and, either because he was warm, or uneasy, or vain, or

perhaps all three, he had turned his coat so far back at the sides that the vest looked like a full-sized square pillow-case. Clarsy's lead-colored alpaca was more melancholy than ever by candle-light ; but then she had a pocket-handkerchief nearly the size of Phil's vest, which she held tight against the middle of her waist, and that relieved the gloom a little. Poor things ! they both looked frightened, but Phil the most so. Clarsy had been through it once before, and he had n't ; besides that, Phil had a big heart, and she a little one ; and, moreover, there was no doubt a perpetual vision before his mind of the possibly resuscitating "Old Jake."

When the ceremony was over, father congratulated them in the most courteous way ; mother did the same ; and then the "quality" was supposed to retire ; although Lucy and I and George, by Aunt Dolly's special invitation, witnessed the fun through a wide and premeditated crack in the kitchen door. And oh, what fun ! The only drawback to our enjoyment was that Fred was away at school, and could not see it too. George went so far as to wish he was a darky himself ; and Lucy and I had to ap-

peal to every feeling of delicacy there was inside of his little nine-year-old breast to keep him from rushing in and participating actively in the proceedings.

"Oh dear!" he groaned, "if it was n't a double-shuffle I could stand it!" But he had to stand it, nevertheless, although he would make his feet go on the entry floor, in spite of our nudges and entreaties. They had come to the genuine, old-fashioned "Old Virginny never-tire" double-shuffle now, and no wonder it set him crazy.

Just after the marriage ceremony was over, the cake and coffee had been passed; then Clarsy's city cousins being introduced to the company, had done their best to overawe the rustic assembly by an amazing display of airs and attitudes, and then the dancing had begun. A little space was cleared in the middle of the floor, hardly big enough to turn around in, and Sam and Cæsar, as brothers of the groom, opened the ball with the time-honored favorite, the double-shuffle. They stood facing each other, their hands hanging straight down by their sides, their eyes rolling, their heads lolling back on their



"The time-honored favorite, the double-shuffle." Page 14.

shoulders, or else by way of variety hanging forward with their chins on their breasts. They danced till the floors shook, the rafters trembled and shed dust, and the candles tottered in their sockets ; the perspiration streamed down their faces, and the cords of their hands stood out like cables. Neither would give in, though both were ready to drop ; the excitement augmented every instant, the spectators cheered and "hi-ed!" and finally joined the instruments with a kind of wild, tuneless, minor chorus, the favorite couplet in which seemed to be, —

"Jump up, Josy, right in the middle on it,
Don't take it all, Josy, lebe us a little on it."

Still Sam and Cæsar danced on with stern determination, fainter and fainter, feebler and feebler, neither willing to be first to yield, both panting and distressed, till finally a brilliant notion struck Sam : he flung his arms around Cæsar with a bear-like hug, and both shuffled down upon a bench together.

Then Clarsy's city cousin, Charles, proposed to show them how folks did these things in the city. "Hullo for Chawls!"

"Clar de kitchen for Chawls!" "Out de way for de city nigger!" resounded from



different parts of the room; and "Chawls," nowise daunted, came forward. He was a very wiry little man, with white cotton gloves on his hands, and small gold hoops in his ears; and his hair was braided in eight tight, stiff little tails, standing out like four horns on each side of his head. He was brimful of airs and

graces and bows, and he made all his gestures with his fingers spread to their utmost extent, and the palms of his hands facing his hearers, as if metaphorically he was putting them down flat and holding them there.

But there was a little jealousy against the "city nigger" and his assumption of superiority; and 'Lias and the other players did not favor him at all; in fact, they put him out as much as possible. Chawls finally had to stop in the very middle of

one of his flourishes, — he danced altogether in the air, and only came down to the floor at long intervals, to get a base for another series of springs, — in the very middle of one of his most wonderful flourishes, and appealed to them most piteously, with the palms of his hands pawing the air :

“ If de gent'lum what scrapes de wiolin and de gent'lum what picks upon de banjos would please to keep little better time, dey would make demselves most agree'ble to my feelinks. You see, gent'lum, I would n't make dis request, but, you see, de way we dance to the city we need de best kind of time. De way you dance to de plantation, you see, where you hangs onto de floor wid your feet all de time, and can't let go, why it 's all de same, whedder or no ; but de way *we* do it, when we got just so much to get along wid, between each step, we need wery partikler time, gent'lum, wery partikler time indeed.”

The appeal was not without effect, and he completed his performance with approbation on the part of the spectators, and intense complacency on his own.

After that the dancing became general,

and between the dances they played games. All of these latter were accompanied by wild, rollicking tunes, sung to very amazing words, and seemed to consist chiefly in choosing favored friends out of the ring, embracing them affectionately, after more or less coquettish reluctance, and then leaving them to make their choice in turn. All this, being done to music, was of course perfectly proper, according to certain rules of high life. The couplets they sang had rather a sameness of sentiment:—

“ I looked to de east, and I looked to de west,
And I looked to de one dat I liked best.”

Another great favorite, which they sang about forty times over, was this:—

“ O, my love, she is so sweet !
O, my love, she is so neat !
O, there 's none so fair
As can compare
With you, my dear ! ”

A third, which also occasioned great delight, was sung by the whole circle, while a woman sat on a chair in the middle with a handkerchief over her head to represent a veil, which was finally plucked off by the victorious suitor:—

“My lady is handsome, she sits in the sun,
As sweet as a lily, as brown as a bun.”

How long the dancing and singing and eating went on, there's no telling, for we children were called away and sent to bed hours before it was over.

After all the jollity was past and ended, the city cousins gone home, the floors scrubbed, the leavings eaten up, and the benches put properly back into the little meeting-house again, as if they had n't been to a dance and had sassafras-beer spilt on them, Phil and Clarsy set up housekeeping in a snug little cabin on the bank of Eel Creek. Mother gave Phil a table and set of chairs and a wooden clock; Aunt Dolly “spared” him a feather-bed; and, with the remains of Clarsy's former household possessions, they were right comfortable. The cabin had a front and back door, and before each entrance Phil had paved a space a yard square with clamshells. On the outside of each door hung a stout loop of string to lift the wooden latch by; but it was n't often used, for the door stood open from morning till night, and Clarsy's chickens wandered in at one door, picked up the crumbs and scratched

in the sand on the floor, and walked out at the other, in a happy, easy, and unrebuked way. The ducks waddled in and thrust their bills in the suppawn pot standing on the hearth, not at all deterred by Clarsy's mild manner of saying, "Wal, now ! what 'll you do next, I wonder !" A fine little pig grunted in a new sty close by ; a black cat dozed away a contented existence on the sunny door-sill ; Phil's gun hung along the rafters on three wooden hooks ; and, to crown the whole, two china dogs and a plaster parrot painted green glorified the mantelpiece. Nothing seemed wanting to complete their felicity, and poor Phil, after all his tribulations, was as happy as a king.

Clarsy made him a tidy, pleasant, sweet-tempered wife ; for, though her brain was weak, it was pliant, and though her heart was small, it was a kind little heartlet as far as it went.

Two years went by as smoothly as possible, and everybody had forgotten there ever had been an old Jake, when, one day, as mother was sitting in her room at work, Clarsy knocked at the door with a trembling hand, and then entered, with her eyes fixed and her lips ashy with fright.

"Why, Clarsy," said mother, "what is the matter? Do speak, child; do speak!"

"It's — it's — it's ole Jake!" stammered Clarsy.

"Old Jake!"

"Old Jake, mistis! Flesh and blood, and no spook! wish 't was!" and then poor Clarsy burst into violent tears. "Lord, Miss Kitty," she said piteously, wringing her hands, "will I be took up and swung?"

"No, no, Clarsy, of course not. You have not done anything wrong; but it is dreadfully unfortunate! Where has Jake been all this time?"

"Wal, the first time he come back he got a chance to ship agin right off, and then he was wracked onto a lonesome sort of a place and had a hard scrabble to git along, and after that he went whalin' a couple of viages, and when he got ashore this time he took a notion to come home."

"Jake ought to be ashamed of himself," said mother, indignantly, "not to send you any word or any money in all that time, so that you could know, at least, that he was alive."

"Lord, Miss Kitty, whose wife be I, any-

how? for, sartain sure, I don't know. Jake says I'm hisn, and I know Phil sets great store by me, and I'm afeerd to tell him."

Father was called in and consulted, and finally, out of pity to Clarsy, assumed the unwelcome task of telling Phil that old Jake had come back.

Then there was a terrible time for a few days. Old Jake was obstreperous and wanted his own, half out of stubbornness, for if he had cared much for her he need not have stayed away nine years; and Phil loaded his gun afresh in the presence of four witnesses, and swore he'd "kill him if he did n't clar!"

Black Ann scoured and scrubbed with the power of an engine from morning till night, singing "Bright Canaan" between her teeth all the time, with a face as hard as granite. She came to my room one night and sat down upon the floor near the door, clasping her arms around her knees, and rocking herself to and fro.

"You like your brudder, Mars Freddy, Miss Cathy? Do you?"

"Why, Anny," I replied, "you know I love him dearly."

"I don't care noffink for Phil, I don't.

Poor darky like me ain't got no feelinks !” and she gave one of her defiant sniffs and rubbed her mouth violently.

“Anny,” I said, “don't talk in that silly way to me. I know just how bad you feel, and I feel very bad about it, too.”

“Do, eh, Miss Cathy ? Why don't you do suffink then ?”

“What can I do, Anny ?”

“Tell Mars Lennie to swing Jake !”

“Swing him ! Why, Anny, you can't hang a man unless he's guilty, and then it must be done by order of a judge.”

“Mars Lennie's a judge.”

“But Jake would have to be tried in court first, and he has n't done anything wicked that I know of.”

“He's 'sarted his wife.”

I laughed, in spite of my perplexity and Anny's sorrow. “Then how could you punish him for coming back to her ?”

“Well, if you can't swing him, tie him up and strap him ! Mars Lennie's too soft ! 'T wa'n't so in old marsa's time ! Mind your manners, or you'd git cut over ! Been tied up and strapped more'n once, myself !” and again she sniffed defiantly.

“I'm sorry, Anny ; it was cruel ; but *you* don't want to be cruel to Jake !”

"Yes, I do! Kill him. I would, if I wa'n't afeerd of gittin' cotched!" and she rocked herself to and fro, harder and harder.

"I'm sure you would n't, Anny," I said; "you're not so bad as that. Wait awhile and see what the end will be."

"I can see it now, Miss Cathy. Don't need no specs for that! All the sense that ever I had I've got it yit. There's Clarsy, now, she never had a grain into her! Allers was as sholler as a milk-pan! Her head's like one of these 'ere wa'nuts that's been lyin' out all winter: looks like other folks' heads on the outside; but come to crack it, and there ain't no meat into it, nothing but a little dirty juice. Miss Cathy'll see what Clarsy'll do! Miss Cathy'll see! I heerd 'em tell how old Jake had four hundred dollars stored up in the bank; and when Clarsy gits a chance, Miss Cathy'll see what she'll do! B'lieve it's the Lord's world, Miss Cathy?"

"I know it is, Anny."

"Lord may be marsa, but 'pears like he's put Satan in for overseer! Said your prayers-yit, Miss Cathy?"

"No, Anny."

"Put Black Ann into 'em to-night, Miss Cathy, sartain sure, will you?"

"I always do; but, Anny, you 've said a very wrong thing."

"Makes no odds, Miss Cathy! Noffink but poor ducky! Could n't be noffink else, if we tried ever so hard! You're good, Miss Cathy, you ain't bad like Black Ann, be you? Good-night;" and before I could answer, with a grotesque movement she had rolled herself to the door, and gone out.

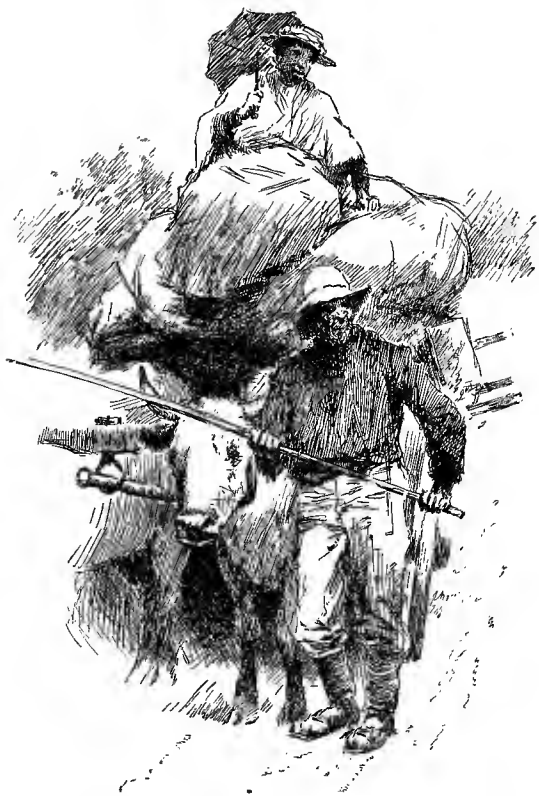
I did not believe Anny's prophecy when she spoke it, but it proved true at last. Jake had seemed to retire and yield the victory to Phil, but there were repeated rumors of his having been seen about the cabin while Phil was off at work in the field; and Clarsy came out almost every week in some new thing or another, which she professed to have bought of a peddler or to have had stowed away for years. First it was a pair of ear-rings, so long, they nearly reached her collar-bone; then a shawl of fiery-red plaid; then a huge bead net, which was not half filled out with her short wool, and hung down at

each side, making her look like a lop-eared rabbit ; then a pair of yellow cotton gloves, and so on through a long list. Phil may have suspected the truth, but no one dared tell him of Jake's visits, and Clarsy always denied them.

In this manner, two or three months passed away, and the time for topping the tobacco came. The hands were always very busy then, and those who went to the lower plantation often stayed overnight to save time, and Phil was one of them.

All this time, while Jake was skulking in terror, and Phil half sick with anxiety, Clarsy rode upon the topmost wave of triumph. It was a most novel and pleasing sensation to be a heroine ; to keep two husbands trembling in suspense ; to make gossip and excitement for all the neighborhood ; to feel herself noted and important for the first time in her life. She took on more airs than a dashing belle spoiled with adulation, and snubbed the other women in a weak, venomless way, and flirted with the men, and dangled her ear-rings, and would n't feed the pig.

One morning, when Phil was at the lower plantation, topping away in the blaz-



“The entire contents of Phil’s little cabin.” Page 31.

ing sun, with busy fingers and an aching heart, there drew up on the carriage-road before the house a very Oriental-looking cavalcade. Old Jake headed it, in a blue shirt, with the ox-goad, or "gad" as he would have called it, over his shoulder, and a look of dogged satisfaction on his face. Behind him came an ox-team drawing a cart, on which were piled the entire contents of Phil's little cabin, the feather-bed surmounting the whole, and on top of that Clarsy, in her red shawl, her bead net, her yellow gloves, and blue parasol. After the cart came the pig, pulled along by a string tied to his yoke, rebellious and grunting. "Did n't like to clar out without saying good-by, mistis," Clarsy said to mother, who went to the door; "thought I'd just step off quiet like while Phil was to field. Phil allers takes on so, and makes such a high time! I'm kinder sorry, but I reckon you better give 'em the gad, Jake, for it's time we was gittin' along."

Phil did not come home till the next evening, and then he found a hearthstone cold indeed: no fire, no supper, no wife, no household-stuff; the Lares and Penates clean gone forever, including the feather-

bed, the pig, and the plaster parrot. Poor soul ! how he raved and cried, and made impotent vows of vengeance. Then he took the molasses-jug and paddled off in his boat to the "store," a few miles away. He came back toward morning as drunk as a fool, and so lay on his cabin floor three days and nights, till the jug was empty beside him. The fourth morning he got up and went to his work with bloodshot eyes and trembling hands, — broken-spirited, mortified, miserable, ashamed.

The night that Phil came home from the plantation, Black Ann was missing all the evening. Probably she had gone off into the woods to sniff violently by herself ; but when I was just ready to go to sleep, she knocked at the door of my room, and when I opened it, she looked as vacant and unconcerned as if there were neither sense nor feeling in brain or heart.

"Said your prayers yet, Miss Cathy?"

"Yes."

"Hi ! too late, be I ? Can't put Black Ann into 'em to-night, eh ?"

"Anny, I always put you in my prayers."

"Sartain sure ?"

"Yes."

"I tell'd ye she go off, did n't I, Miss Cathy?"

"Yes, you did."

"I tell'd ye Satan had the upper hand round here, did n't I?"

"You did, but that is n't true."

"Hope to massy he's got power enough left to carry off old Jake and that jade Clarsy!"

"Now, Anny, you must not talk so. I can't see that anybody has been very wicked. Mother says it was not wrong for Clarsy to marry Phil, when she thought her old Jake was dead; and it was n't wrong for her to go back to Jake when she found he was alive. It's very unfortunate, it's a great pity, and it's very hard for poor Phil. He's the one that suffers, for he thinks a great deal more of Clarsy than she deserves. Be patient and good, Anny, and he'll get over it after a while. It's late, and you must go now. Good-night."

But after I had shut the door and was half asleep, the poor creature came back once more.

"Miss Cathy, won't you git up and say them prayers again, and put Black Ann into 'em? I can't rest to-night, nohow."

"Anny, why don't you pray to God for yourself?"

"Lor, Miss Cathy, poor darky like me can't pray! Lord would n't pay no 'tention to me! Like 'nough don't know there is any Black Ann!"

"Try it and see. Your prayer is just as important in his eyes as if you were the President himself; and if you want rest and peace, you must ask God yourself, Anny. Will you?"

"Ain't sure, Miss Cathy. Mebbe I will, and mebbe I won't. But you say yourn anyhow. Wisht I could hear 'em! Could n't Miss Cathy say 'em out loud?"

I was frightened, but I dared not refuse. We knelt down together; I laid my hand on her head to soothe her, and I felt her tremble under it like a leaf in the wind.

As for Phil, he was sober for a fortnight, and then went off again and was drunk two or three days. So the poor creature went on for months and years. Mother's entreaties, father's expostulations, Black Ann's coaxings, and Aunt Dolly's scoldings, had not the least effect on him. He always answered pleasantly; said mistis was very kind, Mars Lennie was right,

mammy and Ann mustn't take on so ; rum was the debbil, and he was gwine to quit ; and then, in a week's time, he would be lying like a beast upon the cabin floor. After a while he was seized with a sort of mania, at those times, instead of a stupor. It seemed as if he drank himself to madness ; and then he would leave home and roam through the pine woods by day, and sleep upon the slippery ground beneath them at night. Sometimes he wept and groaned, sometimes raved violently, sometimes was sullen or stupid, but always utterly irrational. Everybody was afraid of him then, and avoided all contact with him. I met him once on the narrow bridge that crosses the Long Marsh ; Lucy was behind me, and there was no room for any one to pass. There could be no one more respectful than Phil in his senses ; but this morning he was crazy with liquor, and he came towards us with a horrible expression on his face, half grinning and half fierce : it was the leer of the devil within him, and not Phil's own self that looked so. We met face to face, and stood so for one dreadful moment.

“Get off, you rascal !” I said, imperi-

ously, with a stamp of my foot. "Get off, and let your young ladies pass!"

He stepped down into the bog with a cringing bow, and grasped at his forlorn cap with his trembling drunken fingers.

"Please 'scuse Phil, mistis," he stammered; "he ain't very smart this mornin'."

I bowed and passed on. Heaven forgive me! I believe I never spoke harshly to one of the poor, patient souls before, nor ever have since; but something irresistible within me bade me do so then, and perhaps it was for the best.

Phil's drunkenness finally became so confirmed that reformation seemed utterly hopeless; no one attempted any further interference, and his miserable life went on for years without any change.

Clarsy, at first, had a most brilliant and prosperous time with her first and third husband; but after a while, to Black Ann's intense satisfaction, troubles began to come. The first shadow that fell across their path was that of the pig. It grew visibly less. He languished day by day; was finally killed just in time to forestall his natural dissolution, and cut up into a very small amount of very measly pork. Soon after

that, the feather-bed got moth-eaten, and the green plaster parrot was shivered by an unlucky blow. The four hundred dollars, which had seemed an inexhaustible treasure to Clarsy, melted slowly away and left not a trace behind; and finally, old Jake took the "rheumatics," and kept his bed for months and years.

Many other changes had been going on during all this time: Black Ann herself was married and had several children; and I, her little Miss Cathy, came back to the dear old home one day, bringing with me, from a still dearer new home, a precious bundle of fat and cambric and flannel, — mother's first grand-baby, my darling little son. Our civil war had been going on then for several years, and the disturbed state of things had made my husband unwilling that I should leave home; but when my baby was a year old, and neither grandfather nor grandmother had ever laid their hands on him in blessing, I petitioned so sorely for leave to take him to them, that my husband could refuse no longer.

I had hardly been at home a half-day, when Anny came up to see me. She

chuckled over the baby and patted him with her big black hands.

"Reel Calvert, you be, little marsa," she said, — "reel Calvert! I reckon Miss Cathy don't think noffink of you, I reckon!" and with that she laughed and sniffed together.

I questioned her about her husband and family; but husband, house, and children could not quench the flame of sisterly love that burned in her faithful breast; and when my questions were answered, she began to talk of Phil.

"S'pose Miss Cathy knows the good news about Phil, how he's 'varted, he is?"

"I heard something about it, Anny, but not enough. How was he converted, poor soul?"

"S'pose you heerd how that new minister came down here 'bout a year and a half ago, and sot up meetins in the housen?"

"Yes, I heard that."

"And how Phil got gwine and could n't stop? 'Peared like suffink drawed him right to 'em! He took on awful, sometimes, he felt so beat. Then he wanted to jine, and Brother Thompson would n't let him. Says he, 'I've heerd you can't keep

stiddy two weeks gwine, and Scriptur says, "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God." Now,' says he, 'the Church of God is the nighest thing to his kingdom on airth, and we've got no right to take drunkards into it!' Then Phil cried, and took on termendous."

"Poor Phil! I don't wonder!"

Anny sniffed twice, and went on. "Wal, then, he says to him, 'If you want to come in, quit drinkin',' and Phil hollered right out before all the meetin', says he, 'I can't! I can't! the debbil's got his claw onto me tight!' Then Brother Thompson got up, and says he, 'The hand of the Lord Jesus is four-and-forty thousand times stronger than the debbil's claw! Take hold onto it, put Satan under your feet, and come into the kingdom!' Says he, 'You can do it, brother! never fear, keep hold of the Lord's hand and walk in! The narrow way is eeny jist wide 'nough for you and him, and no more and no less. Go home,' says he, 'and pray on your knees, till you slip out from under the debbil's grip like an eel! And when you come and tell me you have n't had a drop of liquor for six months, you shall jine, and

we 'll praise the Lord !' Now, Miss Cathy, what do you think ? ”

“ I think he did it, Anny. I think God helped him, and he is a changed man.”

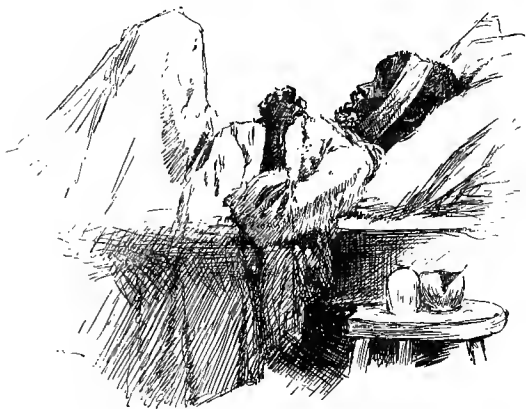
“ Jist so, Miss Cathy. He never touched a drop; and then he jined. That's six months ago, and he's stiddy as a ginerall yit ! ”

“ How glad I am ! and how happy Phil must be ! ”

“ Hi ! ain't he though ! allers singin' or whistlin' ! What 's more, he's got another gal, an awful smart gal, and dreadful pious too. Name's Matildy Jane. Lives over to the next plantation. She's 'mazin' light-colored, and reads books jist like quality. She's been a member five or six years, and would n't take no notice of Phil before he jined. Since that, they've settled it betwixt 'em, and, my ! ain't Phil tickled ! He sets great store by her ! Got his house all prinked up, too ; and if it wa'n't for the war, they'd be married right off. But Phil's got a notion into his scop about 'listin', and I'm despit feerd he'll go. Miss Cathy knows old Jake is dead, don't she ? ”

“ No, I did n't, Anny.”

“Lor, yes! Clarsy had to tend him like a cross baby, for five or six years. He was all doubled up with the rheumatics, and he jawed most of the time. What



does Miss Cathy think Clarsy did after Jake was buried?”

“Nothing very wise, I’m afraid.”

“Took and sent word to Phil that she was in the market agin!”

“Why, Anny!”

“Yes, Miss Cathy, true as you live. If she ain’t sassy, I don’t know who be! Phil didn’t take no notice of it, but I sent her word that Phil was out of the market, and

if she was in, she better stay there. Sich second-hand trash didn't sell down this 'ere way. She's got her ear-rings yit, Miss Cathy, and that's all she wants ; and Phil's got a smart gal that's got religion and larnin', and if he only gits that war-crank out of his head, he's sot up for all his days."

But the "war-crank" did not go out of Phil's head ; it only went in deeper and deeper. The discussion of the emancipation question had been long and loud, and its reverberations reached the remotest corner of our Western Shore. Colonel Birney had established recruiting-stations in every county, and many of our hands and those from neighboring plantations had already enlisted. It appeared to be a point of conscience with Phil to go ; there seemed to be a direct connection in his mind between his own changed and happy condition and the duty of serving the country or his own race.

"I've had so much done for me," was his own simple language, "that it 'pears like I must do suffink for somebody else."

The feeling was too strong upon him to be withstood, and at last he went to Lower

Marlboro and enlisted. There were a few days of leave-taking, a few proud hours of stalking about in his trim new uniform, and then he left his little cabin, so lately fitted up, his friends, his faithful Brother Thompson, his peaceful little meeting-house, and his pious girl, and went away into the clamor and tumult of war.

In the edge of the oak woods, sheltered from the north winds, sloping toward the south, sleeping with their faces to the east, repose the mortal remains of the grandparents, great-grandparents, and remoter ancestors of our family. Outside of the paling which encloses and protects the marble-marked graves of the "quality" stand numerous crosses of wood, painted white, and lettered in black. There are no dates upon them, no titles, no words of praise or texts of promise; only such names as "Hannibal," "Pomp," "Uncle Harry," "Old Ike," "Jake's Sally," "Pete's Billy," and the like.

Some of our Northern friends have smiled at their quaint appearance, but they do not bring the thought of a smile to me. They make my heart swell, till it feels as

if it would burst ; for do I not know all the stories of their patient lives ? — who was happy, and who was sad ; who was wronged, and who did wrong to others ; their ignorance, their temptations, their struggles, their triumphs : I know them all. They have left these things far behind them now, and in death there is small difference between masters and servants. Their graves lie in the sun ; the distant murmur of the waves upon the shore soothes all the air around ; they face the east, too, and shall rise at the last day to meet the coming Christ.

But our Phil is not there. We heard indistinct rumors of him for a while, then followed a long interval of silence, and after that came the tidings of his death. We heard that he was wounded, but how nobody knew ; and when he died, or where, no man could tell.

It matters not. There is One that knows and that cares. Dynasties rise and fall ; peace broods over land and sea with dove-like wings, or war rends nations with its slaughtering sword ; whole systems are born into the galaxy of stars, or suns go blazing out into darkness ; and still the

mighty Father of all forgets not the smallest need of his humblest child. Their sorrows touch him, their prayers reach him, their tears move him ; he gathers them to himself in his own way ; and so it matters not to us how, when, or where he took our Phil.



AUNT ROSY'S CHEST.



THIS world has produced but one Aunt Rosy ; none such were ever known before her, neither after her have any arisen like unto her. She was the idol of the nursery ; and though there might be minor deities among dolls or dogs or books, we all united to worship at her shrine.

She was nurse at the old place for more than thirty years, and two generations of babies had been cradled on her wide lap, tossed in her strong arms, and hushed to sleep under the eaves of her turban. So far as children were concerned, she had certainly found the lucky-stone. Cross babies became serene under her conciliatory cooing ; staringly wakeful little eyes were seduced into sleep by her slumberous

hushaby ; stubborn stomach - aches were charmed away with her soft patting and peppermint - tea combined ; cruel, hidden pins that pierced tender flesh her knowing fingers would find and draw out as with a magnet ; and first and last, and black and white, seventeen babies have cut their teeth on the soft, tough forefinger of Aunt Rosy's left hand.

As for the woes of older children, it paid well to be thwarted, for the exquisite comfort of throwing yourself on her broad, pacific bosom, and feeling her arms about you as she swayed to and fro and crooned to you ; while her long ear-ring dangled against your cheek all the time, and her big boxing-glove of a hand went pat, pat, pat on the middle of your back, till you felt as if heaven, and love, and all things dear had found their home within the folds of Aunt Rosy's blue jean gown and red and yellow bandanna.

It is strange to see what varied traits distinguish the families on an estate ; they might almost belong to different races, in their marked diversity. Phil's family, for instance, were sooty - black, patient, hard-working souls ; while Sancho's people

were little, wiry, grayish, apish-looking creatures, quick and cunning as monkeys, and with no more apparent conscience; and Aunt Rosy's relations were gigantic men and women, — children of the Anakim, — with huge frames well padded with flesh, and religious through every ounce of their substance. Her parents, Aunt Patience and Unk Steve, were the models of piety for all on the old plantation, and for years their little cabin had been the scene of the weekly prayer-meeting. They had been young, and now they were old, and in youth and age they were still the same patient, God-fearing, childlike souls, bringing up children and grandchildren to follow in their steps; a huge, brawny, faithful race, ponderous and pious, exponents of muscular Christianity in the fullest sense, and a terror to evil-doers as much for their strength as their goodness. More than once it happened that when some one of the men in the kitchen had infringed Aunt Rosy's rights, or used his tongue too freely in her presence, she had quietly but remorselessly shouldered him like a bag of meal, and, marching out of the kitchen-door, tossed him into the middle of the

duck-pond. "Let 'em mind their manners," she would say loftily, "or Aunt Rosy'll give 'em another chance to larn." Aunt Rosy always walked with her head high in



the air, her elbows well squared, — that is, if it is possible to square such a circle as her arms were, — and with a sort of rolling gait that could afford to appear unsteady because it was really so firm. Her great cushioned feet came down with elephan-

tine weight and softness, silent as a cat's, but shaking the earth ; and as she stepped she seemed always to sink an inch or two before she came to the solid, as if she had scrubbing-brushes strapped to her soles and the bristles bent under her weight. Hundreds of times, when we were all little and Aunt Rosy had washed and dressed us for dinner, she would take Lucy and me in her arms, and Fred and George on her back, singing after a fashion of her own, "Aunty Rosy's pinky-posies, two in her arms and two on her shoseys ;" and then she used to settle down so as she walked, it felt as if she were going through the floor ; but she never did, and, so environed and surmounted with children, she carried us down the stairs, across the broad hall to the dining-room, and deposited us safely in our seats.

Happy were the children that grew up under the broad shadow of Aunt Rosy ! It was impossible to be persistently naughty under her régime ; she did not believe in badness, she ignored it. When any one was passionate, they were only "makin' b'lieve ;" when they sulked, they were just "a gittin ready to be good ;" and overt

acts of anger or mischief that could not be winked at were "great mistakes, that warn't agwine to happen agin on no 'count."

Her resources in the way of amusement were unfailing. Tea-parties were improvised in an instant at all hours of the day; the irksome routine of the toilet was transformed into an exciting little drama, where each played a fascinating role; and whenever we went to walk, Aunt Rosy trundling slowly along as a centripetal force, and the children racing on before or behind and coming perpetually back to her, there was always some mighty mission to be performed, a despatch to carry, or a prize to secure. If Aunt Dolly was sick, Aunt Rosy could take her place in the kitchen, for working was one of her gifts, and then the children followed, and played at bread and cake making; or if the laundry work was behind, Aunt Rosy walked into the washroom and finished up the fine things with magical skill, teaching her adherents in the mean time to flute doll-clothes. Her needle-work was exquisite, too; and, in fact, there was hardly anything about a house that she could not do admirably; so good and so skilful was she,

that every one looked up to her and loved her, from the head of the house down, — excepting Aunt Dolly, whose approbation was the least bit dimmed by a tinge of jealousy; and Sancho, who never looked up to mortal being. But there are spots upon the sun, — I have tried in vain to see them, but science assures us they are there, — and so there were tiny maculæ, equally invisible to me, upon Aunt Rosy's great, warm, loving heart, — spots, she has told me, of pride and self-esteem. She was proud of her strength, proud of her pious parents, proud of her position in the family, proud of the confidence reposed in her, and of the children under her charge, and especially proud of the superior language she occasionally used; it was a thorn in the flesh of the other servants, and she added to its poignancy by the elaborate humility with which she used to explain that persons who had "lived right amidst and amongst quality for better 'n thirty years could n't be 'spected to talk like poor ignorant darkies." Aunt Dolly used to say that, "Dat ar Rose was a pleggy sight more high'n mighty dan de mistis;" and as for Sancho, she never came near him,

without his seizing hold of the first solid thing he could find, and beseeching her to "haze along quick, 'fore dem airs blowed him away, 'cause he 'd done clar forgot to put dem weights in his shoes dat morn-in'!"

Aunt Rosy had been married once, long ago, in a time so far back that she declared she did n't remember much about it. She could recollect all that had happened when she was a child, and everything that had taken place since the nuptial knot had been severed, but of that intermediate time she was quite oblivious. Out of this matrimonial voyage, with its calms and storms and final impenetrable fog, Aunt Rosy appeared to have saved only two things, — one was a very small and gloomy opinion of the lordly sex ; the other an exceedingly large and bright blue chest, iron-bound at the corners, and with such a padlock as one only sees nowadays in Punch. With all her worldly goods she this endowed, and might have got into it herself very comfortably besides. Here she kept her clothes, her keepsakes, her trinkets, and her spelling-book ; her needles, scissors, threads, and thimbles, — stout, round,

steel thimbles like little tubs with the bottoms out,—and pieces of soap, ends of candle, knots of yarn, and papers of “good-ies.” Here reposed in sacred seclusion her early husband’s best “swaller-tail, Sabbath, go-to-meetin’ coat,” kept possibly, not so much from love for the departed, as from fear that it might be claimed by some grasping relation-in-law. Here, too, lay scattered in one corner or another her precious turbans,—brilliant plaid gingham for week-days, blazing bandannas for Sundays and small occasions, and snowy crisp cambric for grand gala days. Her comb and brush dwelt there in darkness from one Saturday afternoon to another, when they came forth, did heavy duty, and went back again. Aunt Rosy was always thinking about making a quilt of the evening-star pattern, and everybody had been giving her patches for twenty years, but she had never got ready yet, and the pieces lay dispersed promiscuously through the chest. Then there were some choice bits of logwood for dyeing things black, a precious powder for taking black spots out of white, various bunches of dried herbs for making catnip, peppermint, or horehound

tea, and an unfailing remedy in a green glass bottle for curing a "pain across you."

These were a portion of Aunt Rosy's possessions, but not by any means all. She had untold wealth of odds and ends in that huge chest, and whenever there came a demand in the family for something particularly uncommon and out of the way, Aunt Rosy's chest would be almost certain to supply the demand. She was like the mother in the Swiss Family Robinson, whose mysterious bag seemed able to furnish whatever was needed in an emergency, or like the householder of Scripture who brought forth out of his treasures things new and old. But Aunt Rosy could not be hurried in her researches, for that chest had characteristics of its own: one was, that whatever you wanted was always at the bottom, while all you did not want was conveniently on top; another was, that owing to the soap, the candles, the herbs, the woollens, and the air-tight lid, its atmosphere, like that of the great St. Peter's, was the same all the year through. It was better than a puppet-show to us children to be allowed to look into it, under Aunt

Rosy's supervision. We never touched it in her absence; for though she had not positively forbidden it, we knew the chest was the very apple of her eye, and, moreover, the great, grim padlock had a *noli me tangere* expression that repressed meddling.

The sun never rose in the east without bringing to Aunt Rosy the virtuous resolution of putting the chest in perfect order before night, if she found leisure; and the sun never sank in the west without leaving her imbued with a mild regret that no such leisure had been found.

"Most 'mazin' thing!" Aunt Rosy would say in her placid, imperturbable way, — "most 'mazin' thing, what a mux that chist gits into! If there was chillen runnin' to it, now, to mux it, I should n't be so took aback, but only me a handlin' on it, and *me* so pretikler, I can't give no 'count of it! Wal, if the Lord spares me, and I live, and git a little time to-morrer, I'll put it to rights, sartain. I reckon that 'ere Sank must come a-meddlin' to it, he's up to everything." But for an unprejudiced mind there was no need to fall back on Sancho's mischief to account for the chaos



“To-morrer, I ’ll put it to rights, sartain.” Page 56.

in Aunt Rosy's chest. Probably she had no motto for action, but her practice had been, "No place for anything, and everything in something else's place." And the padlock, which in point of size might have belonged to Og, king of Bashan, had its little ways for all that. It "took kinks," and came to a dead-lock somewhere in its vasty dim interior. Then, if Aunt Rosy wanted to secure her possessions, she took the simple method of lifting the great chest in her strong arms and turning it just upside down upon the cover ; safe in the knowledge that it would take two men to put it back again, before meddling hands could get a chance to "mux" her treasures.

Sancho, whose character Aunt Rosy had slightly aspersed, was like and yet unlike the chevalier Bayard ; being unfailingly *sans peur*, but unfortunately never *sans reproche*. He had been in the kitchen a year or two, to run of errands, pick up chips, black the boots, and roll round under foot generally, and had recently been promoted to the office of waiter, in place of Dick, retired, superannuated. But Dick had only retired as far as the pantry, where

he watched over the best china, and rubbed the silver, and whence he darted forth twenty times a day, like a big black spider from his lair, to pounce upon the unwary Sancho, and drag him to justice for his pranks ; and Sancho, in return, tormented Dick almost to the disrapture of soul and body. It was soon found out by the higher powers, that it was of no manner of use to punish Sancho for his tricks. While you were tutoring him for one, he was cutting up three more under your very nose. Just when you thought one piece of mischief fairly dead and buried, up sprang a host of others from that prolific soil ; as if, like Cadmus and his dragon's teeth, every one that was sowed produced an army.

But Dick, on the other hand, was the very genius of deportment. He had a high sense of duty, immense personal dignity which never relaxed, and a stiffness of manner beyond the primness of pokers, beyond the rigidity of ramrods, beyond everything but his own ideal of "de fust manners of de fust waiter in a fust family." Sank was one long agony to him. No one but a pompous master of ceremonies, yoked in abhorred and perpetual fel-

lowship with the court fool, could possibly appreciate Dick's sufferings.

The much-esteemed chest stood in a little room opening out of the nursery, where Aunt Rosy slept, and where she might be said to hold her court ; for large and sunny as the nursery was, whenever there were narrations going on, or Scripture renderings after Aunt Rosy's own fashion, we all liked to crowd into her little room and sit along on the edge of the chest, like a row of chickens at roost.

She was considered a great speaker and exhorter, in the meetings held at Unk Steve's little cabin. In fact, she stood next in renown to Unk Steve himself, who was esteemed second to none



but those who were called "pinted min-

isters." He could not read one blessed word, but he had faith as a little child; and then, too, there were open visions vouchsafed him, which counterbalanced all small external deficiencies.

We used to want Aunt Rosy to take us to these meetings sometimes, but she never approved the plan.

"Go to yer own church, chillen," she would say. "Them that goes a-gaddin' from meetin' to meetin' is jist like butterflies; they sniff at a powerful sight of things, but they don't gather no honey. Go to yer own meetin', and 'tend to yer own minister. It takes larnin' to edify quality. White preachin' for white folks, and culled preachin' for culled folks."

"Then why is n't there a white Bible and colored Bible?" I asked one day.

"Wal now, ducky," she answered, "don't you know the word of God is clar like crystal; but when you put that crystal in the sun you see all the colors of the rainbow in it; every one finds his own color there if he's a mind to look for it. And jes so with God's word: all colors and all kinds have got a share into it."

"But how will it be when we come to go to heaven, Aunty?"

“Wal, chile, you can’t understand ’bout that now very easy. You see we’re all like so many snails now, each into his own shell, some white on the outside, some black, some striped-like, and some pretty much mixed ; but when the day comes to break through these ’ere shells, and stand with our souls bare in the sight of God, he’s gwine to take all those souls that love him and wash ’em white in the blood of Christ ; and those that don’t love him, — those that don’t, — wal, ducky, we’ve got nothin’ to do with those that don’t.”

Aunt Rosy was very fond of telling us Bible stories ; and as she could not read, notwithstanding the spelling - book enshrined in the chest, the chapters that some of us read to her one week would come forth from her lips the next in so new a dress and so fresh a light, that they both astonished and fascinated her young hearers. She had her own ways of illuminating dark meanings, but she was as scrupulous as St. Paul, when he said, “Now the rest speak I, not the Lord ; yet I give my judgment.” “Chillen,” she would honestly explain, “this is my ’pinion ’bout it, recollect ; I don’t say its Scripter,

but I do say it's my 'pinion." She quite agreed with St. Paul too on the subject of marriage, except that she applied it to one sex only. "When yer Aunt Rosy's dead and gone to glory, chillen," she used to say, "and yer all grown up massas and mistises, then you must 'member what she tells yer. Massa Freddy and Massa Georgy, they must git married jes as soon as they find a *good* wife, for a *good* wife is from the Lord. And my little young ladies, they must stick to their father and mother ; for don't you see, the angels don't marry nor give in marriage, and some of these 'ere fine pious little ladies, as knowin' as grown-up babies, they're too much like the angels to be mixin' theirselves up in such a despit bad mux of troubles as mankind have made it. 'T was meant to be the best thing for all, married life was, I should n't wonder ; but Lord, chillen ! men have spiled it, till it's lost all the color and shape it had when the good Lord fust set it agoin'."

The parable of the Prodigal Son, — who was always spoken of, however, with an unscriptural vagueness as the Probable Son, — and the parable of the Ten Vir-

gins, were two of Aunt Rosy's favorite topics. It is possible that circumstances had somewhat prejudiced her mind, for she always insisted that the five wise virgins were five righteous females well prepared to meet their Lord; while the five foolish ones were five reckless men, who counted upon getting into Heaven on the merits of their sisters and cousins.

"Them five scatter-brains," she would say, "they spent their time a eatin', and drinkin', and smokin', and like nuff pitchin' pennies or playin' picky-puey, and the time was come for to start, and sure nuff, their lights was all out and they wanted to borrow! That's jes like some folks, — borrow, borrow all their lives and on their dyin'-beds! If they should any way git to Heaven, they'd be bound to snap a string in a jiffy, and want to borrow somebody else's harp! Wal, you see, those five wild young fellers, they wanted to borrow, and those five pious young women, they couldn't lend noways. Now I'll tell you why. 'T warn't 'cause they were stingy, 't warn't 'cause they didn't have plenty; 't was 'cause that lamp that lighted them right through the darkness into Heaven was

jes nothin' but the bright shining love of the Lord Jesus in their hearts, and that's a thing you can't borrer, be you ever so put to it; nor you can't lend, even when yer ready to die, you want to give it so! Each one for hisself, when that great day comes! But 'bout those five scatter-brains, chillen, that's not Scriptor, recolleck, but it's my 'pinion."

Aunt Rosy had been telling us about old times one day, and of a terrible storm that had raged once when she was a child, — a storm that had cast a ship ashore, thrown down the east chimney, and uprooted a great oak that stood nearly in front of the house on the lawn.

"You look in the old, old massa's picter, chillen," she concluded, that hangs to the end of the hall, and way behind him you'll see that tree all painted out green. Then you can tell jes' whar it used to stand."

We scampered down stairs in a string, to look at great-grandfather's picture, and see how the oak stood, and meeting Fred on the stairs, took him with us.

"O dear," said Lucy, gazing up at the stern old portrait, "I'm so glad our papa don't look in that cross way! I'd be

afraid to sit on his lap, or pull his curls, or anything."

"O but, Lucy," said Fred, "men had to look stern in those days when he lived: they were patriots and soldiers, and they fought for their country."

"I like him," said Georgie, "because he's got such a pretty picture of a little chicken tied to him."

"It's not a chicken, it's a bird," said Lucy.

"It's the king of all the birds, it's an eagle," said I.

"It is the Order of the Society of the Cincinnati," said Fred proudly, getting on a chair to see it better. "It belonged to my great-grandfather first, and then to my grandfather; it goes from eldest son to eldest son, always; now it's father's, and then it will be mine; and it will go to my eldest son after me, and to his eldest son after him."

Fred looked so funny, standing up with his thirteen-year-old curly head high in the air, talking in that large way about his grandchildren, that we laughed, and he flushed up, displeased for a minute.

"It's nothing to laugh at," he said, "if

you only knew what it meant ! The society was named after Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus, a Roman citizen, who left his plough and his peaceful home to go and fight for his country ; and when the war was over, and the people wanted to make him something great, — dictator, or something else, you'll find out when you get into Robbins's Outlines, bother take it ! — he would n't be made anything of, but just went quietly home again. And that's the way our men did in the Revolution. But you had to be not only a soldier, but an officer and a gentleman, before you could belong to that society, and that's why I'm proud of it."

"If you're going to have that pretty bird, where is he now?" asked Lucy.

"I'll show it to you!" cried Fred eagerly, jumping down from his chair ; "I know just where father keeps it, in the little drawer of the desk in the secretary;" and darting away, he returned again in a minute with the badge swinging from his fingers, and held it up before our admiring eyes.

It was a lovely thing enough to childish fancies ; a golden eagle, brilliant with green enamel and fiery red eyes, suspended on

a thick blue ribbon with a white edge.

There was a chorus of approving voices, and Fred exclaimed, "I knew you'd like it, when you saw it;" and then, full of enthusiasm, he entered upon an animated account of the forming of the society, the meaning of the emblems, the beautiful badge



sent by the queen of France to General Washington, and all the stately ceremony of the early meetings, when suddenly, in the very midst of his spirited little oration, we heard the wheels of the carriage that was bringing home our parents from a two days' visit at Aunt Singleton's, and, while Fred hurried away to put the badge in its place, we sped to the piazza to shout our

noisy welcome, forgetting Cincinnatus, war, glory, and grandfathers in the joy of seeing the dear faces again, and the fun of pulling open the papers of bonbons that Aunt Singleton had sent.

Fred's vacations always flew by like the flight of a swallow ; and almost before we knew it he had gone back to school, and everything was going on again in the old pleasant, quiet way. The year rolled by, and brought no apparent change to any one but poor Aunt Rosy. Her health seemed to fail day by day, till she was only a dark phantom of her former self. She hardly appeared to know what was the matter with herself, and to all inquiries came the inevitable response, " It 's a pain across me ! "

There never yet was a creature on all the place who did not make exactly that answer about his illnesses. No matter whether he had measles, or fever, or rheumatism, or indigestion, or headache, or chills, that was the invariable statement, " It 's a pain across me," and nothing but the closest cross-questioning would elicit anything more definite. Whether there is a sensitive slice across the middle of the corpo-

real substance of the race ; whether their nerves are all gathered into a belt about them, instead of being generally diffused as in paler nations ; or whether the expression has a large vagueness about it that covers many symptoms and has a sound of dignity to their ears, — it is impossible to tell : the simple fact remains, that this is their one only and inalienable complaint ; and Aunt Rosy's "pain across her" grew worse and worse, till strength and flesh were gone, and her huge frame showed its joints and angles in a way hitherto unknown in her family. With her failing health, her spirits seemed to change too. She was always kind and docile, and patient as an angel, with the mischief and waywardness that spring spontaneously in every nursery ; but her serene, childlike faith and cheerful religious views seemed to have vanished. She would sit on her chest, or on the side of her bed, and clasp her big hands and sway to and fro, and sigh as if her heart would break. Sometimes she would speak of herself so despondently, and with such dark forebodings, that it made us cry and cling to her.

One day, soon after Fred had come home again, he chanced to be in the nursery and heard Aunt Rosy talking to Lucy, in her little room. "Wal, chile," she said, "I'm been thinkin' 'bout that sermon Mr. Scott preached two Sundays ago. If there's people 'lected to be lost, I'm feared I'm one on them."

"What does 'lected to be lost' mean?" asked Lucy.

"Why, chile, 'pinted by God, chose out by him afore you was born, to go down to torment, whether or no."

Lucy's eyes opened wide with horror, and Fred exclaimed in his cheery way, "Pshaw! I don't believe it! I don't believe Scott preached it."

"Yes, he did, chile, he said it."

"Well, if he did, that don't make it so. It's a horrid thing to say about God, and I don't believe it!"

"Don't you, chile? Whyfor, now?"

"Because it is n't sensible, it is n't right. God is good and just, and that is about the meanest thing a bad spirit could do. Come, cheer up, Aunt Rosy! If you don't I'll pull your turban off, or rummage in your chest, or do something bad to excite

you ! There 's going to be company to-day, and we 've all got to be jolly, so cheer up ! ”

Cousin Mary Singleton happened to be staying with us then, and, by way of a mild festivity, mother gave a little dinner for her. Toward its close, unfortunately for Fred, the conversation chanced to turn upon the old Cincinnati Society, and Cousin Mary having never seen the order, father went to get it for her. He returned without it, however, smiling at his own invariable inability to find things, and promising that mother should show it to her by and by. The conversation changed to something else, and we thought no more of it till the guests were gone, when we children were called into mother's room. Father sat there looking very grave. “Children,” he said, “the badge of the Cincinnati Society is gone ; at least, your mother and I have made a thorough search for it, and cannot find it. Have any of you seen it, or taken it ? Do you know anything about it ? ”

“I guess papa means that pretty chicken Fred showed us,” said Georgie.

“Yes,” said Fred, “that 's it. I had the

badge out, last vacation, father, a year ago ; I was telling the girls and George about the society."

"But you only had it out a few minutes, Fred," said I, "and you put it right back again."

"I know it," he answered, blushing, — "that is, I meant to ; but I'm not sure I did."

"What then ?" asked father.

"I had it in the dining-room, — Sank was there, — I remember holding it up for him to see ; then I heard the carriage stop, and I laid it down on the table under the glass. I meant to run and just see if it was really you who were coming, and then to hurry back and put it away ; but I'm afraid," he stammered, "I do believe — I've never thought of it from that day to this."

"O Fred !" said mother, "how could you be so careless of a thing your father values so much !"

"I don't know, mother, I'm sure. I'm awfully sorry. I meant to put it back directly."

"That is the last we know of it, then," said father ; "on the table under the mir-

ror, a year ago ! It seems rather hopeless, for a person who would keep it all this time would scarcely give it up now."

The next thing was to question the servants, but all professed their entire ignorance of the matter. Aunt Rosy and Dick, Aunt Dolly and Black Ann, had all lived in the house for years. The only people at all new were Sancho, and Clarissa, who helped Aunt Dolly in the kitchen ; and so the suspicion seemed to rest between those two ; but Clarissa's work never called her into our part of the house, whereas Sank was the last person seen near the lost badge, so the range of possibility narrowed more and more, till everybody was persuaded that Sank was the culprit, except Aunt Rosy. Mother had sent her to talk with him about it, thinking she might win his confidence by her placid, coaxing ways ; but when the conference was over, Aunt Rosy declared her belief in his innocence, and always held to it. Still that did not greatly change the general opinion, for every one knew that she liked always to believe what was good, and was invariably sceptical about evil ; so each individual conviction remained the same, and con-

tinued to lay the guilt on Sank's shoulders. "Poor ignorant boy," said mother, "what else could one expect of him! I think I had better talk with him myself, and perhaps I can persuade him to confess the truth."

So mother and Sank held a secret conclave. Mother began with a short eulogy, in her gentle way, on the beauty of goodness and truth, to which Sank responded, "Yas, 'm," regularly at every tenth word; then she made various encouraging remarks about her feeling sure that Sank wanted to be good and truthful, which he struck off into decimals as before, with a drawling, "Be sure, mistis;" and finally she begged him to tell her the truth about the badge.

"Did you see it, Sank?" she asked.

"Yas, 'm," said Sank, "seen it all to pieces! looked him right in de eye!"

"Then what happened?"

"Mars' Freddy laid it on de table."

"Well?"

"And run away to see ef you was a-comin'."

"Yes."

"Yas, 'm."



“ Did you see it, Sank ? ” Page 76.

"Did you take it up?"

"Yas, 'm. Turned him over to see what de oder side was like, and turned him back agin, like a chicken a-brilin'."

"And what then?"

"Den, noffink."

"Did you touch it again?"

"No I never, mistis!"

"Are you *sure*, Sank?"

"Lord, mistis, I ain't got *that* complaint! It's light-headed I be, not light-fingered! I'm so feerd o' gittin' cotched, I durs n't hook noffink!"

"Sank, can't you stop joking for one minute, and be serious?"

"True as I live and breave and draw de breaf o' life, mistis, I don't believe I can! Ef I was swingin' from a galluses or wriglin' on a eel-spear, I might, p'r'aps! Gwine to try me?"

"No, no; but, Sank, I do hope you have told me the truth. I shall believe you at all events. I can't think you would look me in the face and tell me what was n't true."

"Oh, bress my heart, mistis, that's easy nuff! I've done it lots of times. Oh, bress my gizzard! I've told Aunt Dolly more'n

leventy thousand lies sence I lived to de house ! Bress all my insides, ef I ain't told Dick a couple o' dozen to-day !”

“Why, Sank, what a dreadful thing to say !”

“But ef I said I had n't, mistis, dat would made anoder one.”

“Sank, why should you want to tell them ? You are kindly treated in every way, are n't you ? Why do you want to deceive any one ?”

“Lord a massy, mistis ! foolin' folks and smokin' 'em was all de fun I used to git ! Now I got dat 'ere old Dick to 'muse me, I ain't so put to it.”

“But there's something beyond all this, Sank ; God commands us to speak the truth ; he loves it, and for his sake we must hold to it in word and action. Don't you want to do what is right, and keep God's commands, Sank ?”

“I would n't mind, as long as dey was right easy,” said Sank, coolly. “Mistis, want to see me walk on my hands ? Bin a-tryin' on it over half de night in Dick's room, and, hi ! how it made dat old darky snore !”

“O Sank !” said mother, “you may go

— on your feet. I'm glad there's a greater heart and wiser head than mine to care for us all ! ”

So Sank went ; but after he had left the room, he thrust his little apish head in the door and said, “ Yer gwine to b'lieve Sank, ain't yer, mistis ? I know yer be, 'cause you said so, and dat's why I'm gwine to tell you suffink else. Ef I have told a million billions lies to Aunt Dolly and Dick, I never told one to my Mistis Calvert, and I ain't never agwine to.” The door shut before any answer could be given.

So that whole matter rested for a while. There seemed no use in saying anything more about it ; and finally Fred went back to school, humbled and mortified that his carelessness had caused so much trouble in the family, but hoping, as all the others did, that accident, not theft, had caused the disappearance of the badge, and that time would bring everything right again.

All this was a subject of great worry to poor Aunt Rosy ; she was so identified with the family, that whatever troubled them troubled her, and, in her wretched state of health, the vexation had seemed to augment her disease very seriously.

She pined and sickened from day to day, till she could scarcely drag one weary foot after the other. The "pain across her," she admitted now, came entirely from her chest, which was a shade less vague than before; but still she seemed able to say nothing definite of it, and refused to see the doctor, even when he was in the house. She could not sleep at night, and used to walk her room with heavy, hopeless steps, hour after hour. "It's them roosters," she said to mother; "they crow and they crow all night, and they keep me a-thinkin' how Peter denied his Master, because he was afeerd of the sarvin'-gals. They 'most put me out of my head, and I can't sleep a wink."

The traditional cock "crows in the morn"; not so the gallinaceous birds of the Maryland West Shore; they begin with the last ghostly stroke of midnight, and keep on till the first wide-awake clang of the rising bell. They crow one at a time, two at a time, by threes and fours, and in grand choruses. The venerable fathers of the roost crow with the wisdom and repressed enthusiasm of the ancients; the full-grown cocks, in what the French

call the *chaud éclat* of maturity, with a clarion call that might rouse the dead; the ambitious young chanticleers, who have not yet grown their cheek-feathers, with a burst of sound that begins more gushingly vehement than any, but ends prematurely, with a mortifying break in their voice. If poor Aunt Rosy kept her vigils through all their crowings, no wonder she was weak and hollow-eyed. Unk Steve came to see her one day, and we overheard a part of their conversation. "Rosy," he said, "'pears to me dere's no 'countin' for dis 'ere complaint o' yourn widout dat old serpent called Satan. 'Pears to me like he's 'stressin' yer body and worryin' at yer soul afore de Lord, like he did to poor old Massa Job, in de Scriptor."

"'Pears the same to me, by spells," said Rosy, wearily; "sometimes I think he's got me tight in his grip. In all yer visions, daddy, did he ever come to ye and wrestle with ye?"

"O Lord a massy! many a time. I've fit wid him, and fit wid him, but he's one o' dem dat don't know when he's beat!"

"Daddy, did he ever 'pear to you like a bird?"

"He did so, darter ; 'peared to me jes like a bird once, bigger dan a turkey-buzzard, and he fit and I fit, and he wrestled and I wrestled, all through de night, and I never shook him off till de break o' day."

After Unk Steve was gone, we heard Aunt Rosy moan as if in pain, and we ran to ask her what was the matter.

She gathered us into her arms with a deep sob, and cried, "O Lord, O Lord Almighty ! bless these darlin' chillen, and pesarve 'em from ever backslidin', for it's right down bitter work to be haulin' up agin ! And, O Lord, save 'em from that awful heart of pride that drags down like a millstone ! that pride that hopples the soul, so it can't nayther run nor feed in the right way ! O my babies, O my duckies, go pray to the Lord for your poor Aunt Rosy."

Her sorrow awed and grieved us, it was so unlike her own old cheery, hopeful faith, that threw sunshine over everything, and we felt that mind and body would be impaired beyond remedy unless some immediate relief could be secured. Mother determined to send for a doctor, in spite of Rosy's reluctance. Our own physician

had gone away for a while, and so a very respectable little man was called in, who practised homœopathically. He was a stranger in the county, having only recently settled there; but his letters of introduction had been such as to establish his position at once as a trustworthy and able practitioner.

He began with the usual mode of questioning.

"It's a pain across me," said Aunt Rosy.

"Across which part of you?"

"My chist; it's all in my chist."

"Does your back hurt you?"

"No, sir."

"Any pain in either side?"

"No, sir."

"Can you draw a long breath?"

"Yes, sir."

"Let me see you. Slowly now."

Aunt Rosy turned her head a little on the pillow, looked at him a moment, and then respired like a champion ox.

"Amazing strength of lungs!" said the doctor. "There can't be any trouble with them."

Aunt Rosy had been getting more and

more vexed with what she considered this fooling. "I tell you, sir," she said, "it's all in my chist! It's all right here, under these 'ere two little bones." She put her thumbs above the belt of her dress. "If ye've got what'll ease my chist, well and good; if ye have n't, it's no use talking."

Now, in the first place, Aunt Rosy had not any little bones, according to the human criterion, in the whole of her great body. Secondly, in the precise spot where she put her thumbs there were no bones at all, but only the cartilaginous continuation of her lower ribs. Thirdly, there was situated behind them nothing more worthy of notice than heart, lungs, liver, part of the stomach, and a large portion of the spinal structure, any disease of any fraction of any one of which could have given her a mortal malady. However, the little doctor replied, gravely, that he thought he could help her. If he had ordered her a pint of salts or a quart of senna, she would probably have accepted the situation, and the storm would have blown over.

But Aunt Rosy had a low opinion of even the mightiest of the opposite sex, and for small men she felt a contempt passing



"Lord, strengthen me this once." Page 89.

words; so when this little doctor pulled out his little case, and displayed the tiny pellets of medicine which were appointed to heal her great diseases, she suddenly awoke out of the lethargy which had possessed her for months. Wrath and indignation burned in her veins. Like Samson in the temple of his scoffing enemies, she seemed to cry in her heart, "Lord, strengthen me this once, that I may be avenged of this Philistine for these three grievances, his sex, his size, and his presumption." She arose off the bed and towered over him, and before the amazed little man could collect his thoughts, she swooped down upon him, coat, cane, case, and all, and lifting him up in her arms ran down stairs with him and set him outside the front door.

Not without creating a sensation though; for Sank caught sight of her, and screamed with pretended horror, but secret delight; and father and mother came running just in time to see the door shut with a bang behind the ejected physician. Father hurried out to apologize for the action as the vagary of a sick person, and insisted on the doctor's staying for dinner; while

mother, for the first time in her life, actually scolded Rosy.

"Mistis!" said Rosy, all in a tremble, "I could n't help it. Such a reg'lar old-times darky as I be can't be cured with sugar-teats! I ain't got no complaint that answers to 'em! He ought to 'a' knowed better! To see that little Jack-doll of a man a-taking out of his little pinhead sugar-plums, and thinkin' he could cure me with 'em, me! *me!* with the biggest pain that ever a poor critter had; *me*, that's got to dwinnle away, and pine, and die, and go to judgment, and likely to torment; cure ME!! Mistis, it's lucky I did n't heave him into the duck-pond!"

"Go up-stairs, this moment," said mother; "I am very much ashamed of you!" And Aunt Rosy went wearily up-stairs, with her head on her breast, and a pitiful moan oozing out through her closed lips. But in a few moments mother's little frost of severity was all thawed away, and she followed Aunt Rosy to comfort her. She was lying in her little room out of the nursery, without sound or motion. She lay like one dead, with that horrible ashy look about the lips and eyes that comes

into their poor brown faces in time of dire anguish. Her face was toward the wall, and her arms stretched lifelessly at her side. Mother sat down by her, on the edge of the bed, and the woman's whole expression of intense agony went to her heart.

"O Rosy, child!" she said, "I wish I could do something for you."

No answer.

"Are you so much worse to-day?"

A faint negative motion of the hand.

"I'm *so* unhappy about you!"

A long, low groan was the only response.

"I'm sure, Rosy," she continued, "that you can tell me more definitely what is the matter with you. I *must* find out. People don't generally have any new diseases you know; and whatever you have is probably what hundreds of people have had before and have been cured of, bad as you may be; and if you only will try, Rosy, I'm sure you can tell me more about it."

"O mistis, mistis," she answered, faintly, "I've told you more'n a hundred times, but you can't take no hint; it's in my chist, in my chist! all in my chist, and I'm dyin', dyin', dyin' with it! Open it," she gasped, — "open it."

Mother leaned quickly over her in alarm, and tried to unfasten the calico gown that lay in folds about her wasted form, but Rosy pushed her gently away.

"No, no," she gasped again, "not here, not here! Open it, open it!" And she made a backward motion of her hand toward the great blue chest behind mother. "Open it, mistis, for de good Lord's sake, open it before I die!"

With the conviction flashing through her mind that Rosy's brain must be crazed, and yet with the mechanical obedience that one unconsciously yields to such piteous entreaty, mother lifted the heavy cover and leaned it back against the wall. The well-known odor filled the room, the mint and soap, the candles and the dyes, smothered in the stuffy smell of woollens and yarn; the old confusion still reigned triumphant; but surmounting the other contents, and resting conspicuously on a white handkerchief, lay the badge of the Order of the Cincinnati.

Mother took it up, softly shut the great lid again, and sat down upon the side of the bed once more. Not a word was spoken by mistress or servant, and nothing broke the

solemn silence except now and then a long-drawn, stifled, quivering moan. One was silent through an anguish of bitter shame, too deep for words ; the other, through excess of pity, as she thought of the sudden, sharp temptation that must have snared that honest, childlike soul, and of the pride, the remorse, the mental struggle, the thousand mysterious pains and woes, the burning tears at dead of night, and the dread of judgment to come, that had racked body and soul with untold anguish.

At last she spoke sadly. "I could never have believed it, Rosy, except from yourself." The woman groaned and writhed and threw her hands up over her face. "I have always trusted you so entirely."

"Oh, my good Lord in heaven knows ! *He* knows, mistis, that's the very thing that's been a-eatin' on me up inside all this while. You allays trusted me. So did Marsa Lennie ! And them blessed chillen, they think their old Aunt Rosy's good, and there's no sinner like her on the face of the airth ! When I was very young, mistis, I thought it was a cussed thing to have a black skin ; but after the Lord opened my eyes to see the truth, I

knowed the skin made no difference, if only the heart was white and clean, for that's what the Lord looks at; but, O mistis, it's an awful thing to know yer soul is blacker than yer body! To know the right and do the wrong, to call the Lord 'Massa,' and serve the Devil, to hold yer head high above the other darkies, when you know all the time you ought to be under their feet, to give evil for good, and to vex and cheat them that loves ye, — that's jes' what *I*'ve been and gone and done, and there ain't a word to be said! there ain't no 'scuse to be made! There ain't no soff side to it!"

"Rosy, how *did* you come to take it? What tempted you?"

"The very old Satan hisself, mistis! Sure I be, he went into that gold bird with his red eyes and his green breast! 'T was lyin' on the table betwixt the windows, and first I thought it was some little trinket-like that warn't o' much use. When I heard Sank comin' I slipped it into my pocket, and meant to ask mistis about it; but it looked so handsome when I got upstairs, that I thought I'd jes lay it in my chist whar I could see it for a while. I

meant to give it to mistis the next day ; for, thinks I, there ain't no hurry 'bout it, when nobody 'pears to miss it. And the next day I 'peared to think the next week would do ; and so I went on, allays meanin' to give it back and never doin' it, till I'd put it off so long that I was dead ashamed to give it to mistis, and knew I ought to every minute, too. And so it went on wusser and wusser, till that day when there was dinner company and marsa missed it ; then I found out how much store he sot by it, and I *darssent* bring it out ! I wanted to and I could n't. I kep' tryin' and some-thin' held me back ! I could n't stan' it to let Dolly and Sank and them know I'd had it all that time. P'r'aps if somebody had jes axed me out and out, I could have said yes. But nobody did. I 'most wished they would many a time, for ever since that day he's been pickin' at my heart with his beak, and tearin' my life out with his claws, and burnin' me through with his fiery eyes, and hauntin' of me night and day, asleep or awake, and draggin' me down, down, down ! O mistis, if there's one hell lower than another, it 's that place of torment I been into for this last year

and a half! I 'spect no marcy from God nor man. I've got no spunk left to ask for it, but I praise the Lord that debble's cast out o' my chist, if I be tore and overthrew!"

"Poor Rosy! what a strange thing to happen to you!"

"'T was pride, mistis, all pride! I knowed I was pious, and I was proud of it. 'Shamed of my black skin, and proud of my white heart! I felt stiff-necked over them other darkies, and the Lord has showed me I better grobble in the dust! What 'll be done to me, mistis? Will I be put in the county jail?"

"No, Rosy."

"Will I be sent to field, mistis, to work along with the hands?"

"No."

"Will I be held up for a warnin' to Dolly and Sank and them?"

"No."

"Wal, what then, mistis? I'd ruther know to once. What *are* you gwine to do with me?"

"I'm going to forgive you, Rosy, and love you and trust you just the same. You are to stay just where you are, and nobody

shall know a word of all this trouble as long as you live."

Then Aunt Rosy's poor, worn, aching heart melted within her. She turned on her bed, and laid her big wasted face on mother's little hand, and cried and sobbed with passionate intensity, pouring out broken words of love and gratitude and penitence and prayer.

"O mistis!" she managed to articulate at last, "you've saved my heart from breakin' and my soul from torment; for sure if *you* forgive me, the good Lord won't be behind his chillen in marcy, and he'll forgive me too! He knows what I've been and suffered! *He* knows it all! None other could think it! And oh, dear mistis, my darlin' chile, let 'em heave them things right onto the floor and h'ist that mis'able old chist into the west garret! It's chuck full of them little ghosts of birds, sperits and spooks, everywhar I look into it, and I'll put 'em all to rights to-morrow in the bureau, if I live!"

A few weeks after, the discovery of the lost badge was announced, it having been found in a medley of things where such a little matter might' be easily mislaid. Fa-

ther probably knew the truth, but no one else so long as Aunt Rosy lived.

As for Aunt Rosy herself, she recovered with astonishing rapidity ; she gained twenty pounds in thirty days, and how much more the record saith not, but she never lost another pennyweight. For the first time in her life she had her possessions arranged in a bureau "like quality," and the monster chest was carried to the garret by Dick and Sank. There, after Sank had stood on his head on it, thrown Dick into it, locked him up and let him out again, threatened to use the padlock as a cookstove, and the key for a waffle-iron, Aunt Rosy's chest was left to long repose.

Wandering up there in the cobwebby gloom of the west garret to-day, among the relics of the past, that speak with a thousand voices of the days that are gone, I came upon it. I lifted the lid, and the dear, dreadful old smell of the soap and mint and woollens and all the rest came breathing out of it and filling all the air. It was quite empty and yet full, — full to me, as once to Aunt Rosy, of "sperits and spooks," and ghosts of bygone years. All

Sank's old mischief rose up from it, all of Dick's stiff, faithful, formal service; in my fancy I saw again the treasures that had filled it, scattered now, never to be gathered in again. Aunt Rosy herself "went to glory" years ago. She lived to hold the first baby of another generation in her arms. The pride that had been a spot upon her piety never stained it more. Gentle, and childlike, even to Aunt Dolly and Sank, her pleasant old days passed away in reverence toward God, and charity toward man.

As I look at the huge old chest, with its iron-bound corners, and lift its cumbrous padlock in my hand, my heart fills to overflowing with sweet and loving memories of her who once possessed it; and I bless the dear mother whose tenderness healed the great, sorely wounded heart, that one accusing word might have broken forever.

MARTY'S VARIOUS MERCIES.



“NASCITUR, non fit,” is an expression that has been used once or twice already, with regard to poets and other geniuses, but I claim my rights as an inventor in first applying it to saints. Small saints, of course ; not the noted ones of the earth. Such a one, for instance, as our Marty, a poor little yellow girl from the South ; born of a hard mother, brought up by a stern master, harrowed by a tyrannical mistress, penniless, friendless, hopeless, utterly ignorant, yet turning into gold every trouble that touched her, by her own ineffable sweetness and patience.

Marty was not born ours. She “married on” a half-dozen years before the Proclamation, when she took our Ed for better — one ounce, — and worse — one pound. Ed himself was the softest, gen-

tlest, most chicken-hearted ducky that ever lolled against the south side of a barn. He was a born musician, like half the boys on the Maryland West Shore, and could sing like a lark, whistle like a throble, play on the banjo, the violin, and the accordeon ; he could rattle the bones and thumb the tambourine, could entice tunes out of a hollow reed, and even compel melody from a jew's-harp.

When he was about fifteen, cousin Mary Singleton's grandfather, the old General, chanced to come down on a visit, and took such a fancy to the boy that he persuaded father to let him carry him back to Annapolis as his own servant ; and there Ed stayed for five years or more. According to an arrangement previously made for our people, Ed was to be free when he came of age ; and when that time arrived he drifted back to the old home, though Annapolis held his heart and soul. His proximity to the Naval Academy had been a most beatific circumstance to Ed ; the drill and parade fired his soul with a lofty ambition to go and do likewise, and for years after his return he was indefatigable in putting the other boys through marvel-

lous evolutions, and training them to the most rigid military salutes. The music of the band lifted him up into the seventh heaven ; but pulling off the General's boots brought him down again, for the General was of a gouty habit, and immediate of speech.

In Annapolis, Ed formed a most devoted attachment to cousin Mary and her brother Clayton, who spent much of their time with their grandfather, especially to Mary. She was a conscientious little girl, and gave up her Sunday afternoons to teaching the servants. Several of them became fair readers and somewhat cloudy writers, Ed among the others, and he never forgot her kindness.

Here, too, Ed became acquainted with Marty ; her sickly, irritable mistress had come up from the Old North State to be under the care of a certain physician, and finding herself improving, made her home there for several years. She died at last, however, and with somewhat tardy gratitude, on her dying-bed she set Marty free. Affairs never made a prompter connection. For Ed, having gradually become the possessor of a gun, an axe, a scoop-net, a

couple of eel-spears, and an insatiable thirst for liquor, as a comfortable provision for old age, patched up a small shed on the banks of Eel Creek, and brought Marty home.

Marty was a meek, patient, God-fearing little woman, full of tender care for others, and oblivious of herself. She was neat and industrious ; so was Ed, when sober. She was cheerful as a sunbeam ; so was Ed, both sober and drunk. She had a heavenly temper, and so had he ; at least, as far as it was tested. How it would have been, had he tarried at home, borne the children, and kept the house, all in the very potsherds of poverty, while Marty genially engulfed the wages that should have furnished food and clothing, can only be conjectured.

As it was, when he took his week's wages and rowed over to the store for molasses and bacon and a quarter of a pound of tea, and came back six hours later, delightfully loquacious, without any bacon, the jug half full of rum, and a spoonful of tea loose in his pocket, Marty only listened silently to his tipsy orations, helped him to bed when he could no longer stand, and then went

down on her knees, and offered her humble prayer for help, while he slept the senseless sleep of the swine. Whatever Ed left in the jug was poured out on the grass, and the last drop carefully washed away, lest the mere breath of the tempter might set him crazy again. Her mild remonstrance the next day was always met by a penitent confession of sin. Ed was drunk at least one week out of three, from the day Marty married him, straight on for six years, and was regularly remorseful after each fall from grace. He always said it was a mortal shame; that Marty was the best girl a man ever had, and Sammy the cutest young one; that he was going to quit drinking and join the church, as true as he lived and breathed and hoped to die the next minute; and Marty implicitly believed him with the matchless faith of a child. She forgave him until seventy times seven, and then went on forgiving as before. In Ed's mind, the rotation of crops was rapid; one week he sowed his wild oats and reaped them; the next he brought forth good fruits; the third, the land lay fallow, and the fourth, was in prime condition for the wild oats again.



“ Her humble prayer for help.” Page 104.

When Marty was clever enough to get his wages as soon as he was paid, she spent them in her own frugal way, and kept everything comfortable. But as time went on and the fearful bonds closed in tighter and stronger about the poor creature, he would steal away to the store on pay-night without going home ; and then, through shame or through reluctance to witness Marty's silent woe, hide somewhere for days till his supplies were exhausted, and come slinking home, dim-eyed, shaken, sorrowful, and sure he should never drink again.

Marty came tapping at the mistress's door one April morning, — that wearied mistress, whose ear was always open to the cry of her people, even when her hands were full and her heart was heavy.

"Come in, Marty," was the ready response to the gentle knock.

The door opened, and Marty's smiling face shone in.

"Mornin', mistes, reckon mistes can see through the walls."

"Not quite, Marty, but I know your knock."

"Yas 'm. Mis' Calvert's markin' things, an't she? Oh me, how bitiful they be, spread out here in the sunshine! Make me think of the robes of glory, they's so blindin' bright!"

And Marty went down on her knees among the piles of snowy linen, and touched them here and there caressingly.

"Marsa well, Mis' Calvert?"

"Very well, Marty; how's the baby?"

"Right smart, thank ye. Cries reel lively. Sammy's got him, to hum."

"Is it safe to leave him with such a little fellow?"

"Oh, yas 'm! Sammy's gwine on five, and I nussed our 'Phibosheth when I was three."

"Where's Ed, to-day?"

"Could n't tell, mistes," Marty answered softly; "hain't seen him sence Sunday."

Mother looked up inquiringly.

"Yas 'm," continued Marty, "that's it. Got gwine ag'in. Promised me Friday he'd never touch another drop, and airly Sunday he was off."

"I wonder that you can bear it as you do, Marty; Ed is drunk half the time."

"Yas 'm. Reckon 't is about that. Kind

o' tryin' in the long run. Sort o' s'cum-vents a critter. Jes' think you're gwine to spar' a dollar or two fer an ap'on or a pair o' shoes, and it's all gone. But Ed's a dretful pleasant boy, Mis' Calvert knows," she went on soothingly, as if to soften mother's disapproval. "I 'count Ed as one o' my chiefest marcies; an't a speck like me, with my dretful, masterful temper; he's mortal pleasant, Ed is. But I came up to take a little counsel with Mis' Calvert. I ben a-plottin' and a-plannin' these three days and nights. I *must* contrive to airn a little somethin' myself, or I dunno what we *will* come to."

"It is a perfect shame," said mother; "have you ever talked to him as decidedly as you ought to about this?"

"Dunno," said Marty; "I an't much of a hand to jaw, but ef Mis' Calvert says so, I'll do it. Think I ought to try to jaw him a little?"

The question was asked with such tremulous eagerness for a negative that mother laughed and said, "No, I fancy words are useless. So tell me your plans, Marty."

"I'm contrivin' and cunjurin' fust off, to get some shingles. Our roof's like a

sieve ; rain drops through right lively. And then I want some shoes for the children agin winter. I an't fer mutterin', with all my marcies ; I could n't be so onthankful. Summer's comin' now, and we'll do fust rate. But it 'pears like I *must* git somethin' ahead before frost comes. Reckoned mebbe Mis' Calvert would let me wash and iron, this summer, or help Aunt Dolly in the kitchen. Some folks says I'm a fust fambly cooker, and I ben trained to wash and iron."

"What could you do with the baby?"

"If Mis' Calvert did n't mind, Ed would shoulder the cradle up in the mornin' — Ed's sech a pleasant boy — and fetch it home ag'in at night, and Sammy'd rock it. It's sech a marcy I got Sammy! Allers did reckon him a gret marcy! If Mis' Calvert did n't want the cradle in the back kitchen, it could stand in the shed."

"You may come, then, on Monday, and I'll find something for you to do."

"Yas'm. Thank ye, marm, thousand times. I'spected 't would be jes' so. Mis' Calvert's allers so clever to us. It's a dretful marcy to have sech a kind mistes. But I had another plan, too. I was gwine to

buy a shote, and fat it, and kill it in the fall for pork. Buy a shote now fer two dollars, and ye can sell him bumbye fer twelve, if he's right fat. But I got to airn the money to buy him, and I was gwine to airn it by havin' a party. Mis' Calvert ever heerd of these new kind of parties they have over to Squaw Neck? Pay-parties, they call 'em."

"No, Marty, I never have."

"Reel smart notion. Jed's Maria, she gin a pay-party and made enough to shingle her roof; and Ruth Jake, after Jake died, she fetched her'n up to five dollars over what it cost her to bury Jake. Folks pay twenty-five cents to come in, and gits their supper and dancin' fer that. Then one o' the fambly keeps a table in the corner with goodies on it, candy and store-nuts and root-beer, and them that wants 'em comes and buys. Mis' Calvert don't see no harm in it, eh, Mis' Calvert?"

"None at all," said mother, smiling in spite of herself at this novel combination of pleasure and profit.

"Yas 'm; glad of that, 'cause I reckoned it a reel marcy that somebody thought onto 'em. Reckon we'll have it in a

couple of weeks, when the weather 's warmer, and before the shotes git sca'ce. If Ed'll keep good and stiddy till then, we'll have a bitiful one." And Marty rose to go.

"What a trial he is to you, Marty!"

"No, marm, not so much as ye think. He's a dretful pleasant boy. I want to tell Mis' Calvert somethin'." And Marty came a little nearer and spoke very gently. "My old mistes warn't soft like Mis' Calvert; but then she was ailin'. But then Mis' Calvert's ailin' most of the time, too. But my old mistes had n't got religion, and Mis' Calvert has. My old mitty warn't pious a mite, and I was dead sot on gwine to meetin'. I s'pose I bothered her, fer she turned round on me right sudden one day, and says she, 'Go to meetin' to-night, ye hussy, and then hold yer tongue about it; if ye ask me ag'in fer a year, I'll have ye whipped.' So I went, glad enough, and I crep' right up by whar the minister stands, so as not to lose a mite, and I had n't sot thar but a little spell when he began to read out of the big gold Bible, and true as ye lives, mistes, every mortal verse was about the Lord's marcy endur-

ing forever. When he'd read it two or three times, says I, 'That's fer ye, Marty, ye poor sinner, that's allers forgittin' the Lord's goodness;' and when he'd read it two or three more times, says I, 'Praise the Lord now, Marty, fer sendin' ye sech comfort, fer whether ye come to church ag'in in a year, or never, ye've got some-thin' to stand by all yer life and on yer dyin' bed!' And when he'd read it a few times more I got down on my knees, and says I, 'Bran' it in, Lord, so I'll never lose the mark on it,' and on my knees I stayed, prayin' it over and over ag'in, till the minister shet the book. It's ben a dretful comfort to me every way, Mis' Calvert; it makes me feel that if the Lord has sech long patience with folks, it an't fer sech as me to be mutterin' and hectorin'."

The mistress looked up into Marty's eyes with a thoughtful smile, and they smiled back full of trust and sympathy, for divided as they were by every social distinction of birth, fortune, beauty, and culture, they were one in that fellowship which outlasts even death, bound with the sacred tie which binds those who have one Lord and one faith.

The next Monday, and every Monday after, arrived Marty's procession, early and always in the same order: Ed first, head erect, cradle shouldered, feet marching true to the tune he was miraculously whistling. Marty next, radiant with the prospect of a proximate party and ultimate shingles, cuddling the baby as she came. Sammy in the rear, whistling like his father, and straining every nerve to make his ducky-daddles of legs march in time, — a futile effort, which had to be supplemented by most unmartial leaps, every few steps.

Marty regarded Sammy as one of her chief mercies, but his life was not unclouded radiance to himself; it vibrated between bliss and woe, and swung from lustrous morn to murky night, or back again, according as that wad of a black-and-tan baby waked or slept. Baby asleep, Sammy was sovereign of the universe; he could build cob-houses in the smoke-house, dabble in the pond with the ducks, hang over the fence of the pig-pen balanced on his unsusceptible stomach, worm in and out of the delightful intricacies of the woodpile, or roll in the chips with a squad of small idlers. Baby awake, Sammy



"Marty's procession." Page 114.

was a mule on a treadmill. He was not allowed to hold it, for, owing to its being such an undefined lump, without any particular projections to seize upon, he had twice let it slip through his arms upon the floor ; so it was deposited in the huge wooden cradle near Marty's tubs or ironing-table, and he was set to rock it.

Sammy always began with cheerful vigor, resolved to compel slumber to its eyes ; he stood up to his work like a man, taking hold of the cradle-top with both hands, and rocking vehemently. Sammy approved of short methods with babies. After half an hour or so of this exercise, baby's eyes growing constantly bigger and brighter, he grew less sanguine, and made preparations for a longer siege. He brought a wooden block to the side of the cradle, and sat down to the business, not cheerful, but resolute ; pushing the cradle with one hand, and holding in the other a piece of bread or a cold potato, out of which he took small, slow, consolatory bites. But the smallest, most infrequent nibbles will finally consume the very largest potato, and this source of comfort exhausted, and another half-hour having dragged away,

and baby's eyes still staring with superhuman vivacity, Sammy wheeled about with his side to the cradle, leaned against the leg of the ironing-table in deep depression of spirits, seeking to beguile the weary time by counting the dishes on the dresser or the flies on the ceiling; while at intervals of a few seconds he bestowed such wrathful, sidewise thwacks with his knee on the cradle as made the whole huge structure tremble, and its gelatinous occupant quiver.

But in the last stages of the conflict, Sammy left all hope behind, and became an image of the profoundest dejection. Turning his back on the cradle in disgust too deep for words, he would lean his elbows on the table and his head in his hands; with his bare foot he loathingly kicked up the rocker behind him, while one jig-tune after another came gurgling melodiously out of his melancholy mouth to the expressive words of "Diddledy, diddledy, diddledy, didy," and the big tears rolled down unchecked. Sammy was too far gone to wipe them away. Meantime the complacent baby gazed wisely at its rocking dome, the flies buzzed, the clock ticked, the tears

fell, the jig-tunes went endlessly on, till Sammy's head drooped, and the "Diddledy didy" grew faint, and fainter, and failed, and the poor little drudge was on the very verge of blessed oblivion, when an imperious wail from the baby recalled him to life and labor once more.

"Come now, Sammy," Marty would say encouragingly, every day, when matters came to the worst, "rock away like a gent'lum. Sech a marcy ye got that cradle! S'pose ye had to lug him, like I lugged our 'Phibosheth gwine on two year. Mammy's tryin' to airn shoes fer ye, and can't do it nohow, if ye don't nuss the baby! And what's more, bumbye, when we have our pay-party, ye shall come to it, ye shall, and have goodies, and set up late."

This would reanimate Sammy for a minute or two, and when sleep finally overtook the baby he darted away like a liberated hare; wild leap after leap carried him to the thither confines of the woodpile, and Elysium began.

"Time's a-gwine," said Marty mildly one May morning to mother; "shot'es is gittin' sca'cer, and that 'ere pay-party don't

'pear to come off. Have to give out fer it a week ahead, so as to let the folks at Squaw Neck and Tuckappoos have a warnin'. I would 'a' gin out fer it last week, but Ed got high, and now, this week, Mother Honner 's ailin'. She was gwine to do fer me, and smart up the house; things gits so muxed whar young ones is kitin' round. Mis' Calvert an't got somethin' to cure Mother Honner, eh, Mis' Calvert?"

"I don't know but I have," answered mother, "if you can tell me how she feels sick."

Marty described the symptoms, and was furnished with a simple remedy, but Hannah did not recover in time for the invitations to be given out that week. In fact, she grew much worse. "'Pears to be reel racked," said Marty, "and she's got a desp'it pain across her; she 'spects it's the medicine."

"That is impossible," said mother; "it was a very harmless remedy I gave her."

"Yas 'm, so she 'spected. She never took Mis' Calvert's doctor-stuff; she reckoned she wanted a right smart dose of somethin' that would strike clar through, so

she took a box of stomick-pills she bought of a peddler-man last fall, — eighteen in the box; she took 'em all. I reckon she overdone; Mis' Calvert reckon so too?"

But what the mistress reckoned was too wide and deep to put into words. Hannah recovered from her corporeal earthquake in the course of a week or two, and Marty's plans were ripe for execution, when Ed suddenly fell from grace again.

"I dunno," said Marty serenely, "as I ever felt so beat. Shotes is about gone. Jes' git my mind sot for that 'ere pay-party, and somethin' knocks the roost right out from under me. I don't want to fret, with all the marcies I have, and everythin' gittin' along so comfor'ble this summer, and Ed such a pleasant boy too, — not a mite like me. I allers was a stiff-necked critter, that's why I git so sot on things, — but it makes me feel putty beat."

"Never mind the pig, Marty," said mother. "I don't believe you would have made much out of it. Why not have the party when it is convenient, and take what you make toward your roof?"

"Wal, I never!" said Marty. "Be sure I can! I was so shaller, I got it fixed in

my head that 't was no use to have the party when shotes was gone ! We 'll have it, I reckon, as soon as things gits to rights."

Cousin Mary Singleton came down to stay with us, just about that time, and Ed hastened up to see her, as he never failed to do. When sober, Ed was the shyest and most silent of creatures, and the interview always took place with the length of the room or the piazza between them, Ed standing very erect, and making his grandest military salute with every sentence. The questions and answers did not vary a hair's breadth once in ten times.

"Good mornin', Miss Ma'," Ed always began.

"Good morning, Ed," cousin Mary always answered.

"Glad to see ye to de old place, Miss Ma'."

"Thank you, I always love to come."

"Miss Ma' putty smart dese days?"

"Yes, indeed, Ed."

"Mars' Clayty smart?"

"He never was better."

"Old Gin'al smart too?"

"He is not quite as strong as he used to be."

"Want ter know! Miss Ma' must 'member my 'spects to all on 'em when she goes back."

"I shall, with pleasure, Ed." And with a last grand salute, more rigidly angular than any, the interview ended. Cousin Mary, however, was well aware of Ed's especial tendencies, and when, on this occasion, instead of standing afar off and making obeisance, he advanced across the piazza and curled himself up at her feet, she was not at all surprised.

"Lordy me! Miss Ma'," he began, "an't I glad ye come, and an't I glad they fetched ye! Jes' the one I wanted to see! Want to take counsel with ye 'bout a party we 're gwine to have."

"Very well, Ed."

"It's a pay-party. Marty's gwine to buy shingles out the makin's. Jed's Maria, she gin one, and it fetched enough to kiver their roof. But as fer old Jed! Lordy, how that 'ere old darky drinks! Miss Ma' 'd be s'prised to see him! Only but jes' toddled round, the night they had it! Had a job to hold up his ugly old carkis!

Rum 's a bad thing, Miss Ma', a dretful bad thing!"

"It is indeed, Ed," said cousin Mary.

"Yes, yes! bad thing! bad enuffy! Miss Ma' knows 't is! So do I! As fer gittin' high, — reel drunk, — can't say nothin' fer it! don't favor it nohow! It 's agin Scrip-ter! dunno how old Jed 'pears to stan' it! but fer gittin' a *leetle* mite off the handle, Miss Ma', jes' a *leetle* mite out the way, now, like I do once into a great while, can't see no harm into it. Miss Ma' see any harm into it?"

"Certainly, Ed. I think you are destroying yourself, and making Marty very unhappy. You ought not to touch a drop."

"Bress my soul, ef that an't jes' the way Mis' Calvert talks to me! Marsa Lennie, too! Miss Ma' 's jes' like the Calverts! favors them all! favors Mars' Clayty, too! How is Mars' Clayty, Miss Ma'?"

"He is well."

"I 'm mortal fond o' Mars' Clayty! He's allers so kind and jo'ful. When he and Colonel Barton came down last time, they wanted me to go down to the inlet with 'em, and take my fiddle. Says I, 'Anythink to oblige ye, Mars' Clayty, but I

can't go, can't spar' the time ; I got a fambly to look arter, and I must stick to my post till I die.' Colonel Barton, he says, 'Ed,' he says, 'you spar' de time to take a week's spree out o' every month,' he says, 'and you can spar' de time sure to come 'long wid us.' Says I, 'Colonel,' says I, 'you speared dat eel squar' dat time,' says I, 'but he can squ'm yit. See-in' I hev' to spar' dat week, whedder or no, I can't spar' no more !' Ye see, Miss Ma', I can't help gittin' a *lee-tle* mite out de way once into a gret while, — *can't* help it. Gwine to stop now for a spell, I reckon, and gib Marty a chance fer to hev dat pay-party ; she sets such store by her pay-party ; would n't ye, Miss Ma' ? ”



“ Indeed, Ed, I 'd stop now and forever ; you could be so happy and comfortable.”

“ Comfor'ble, Miss Ma' ? Reckon I

could! Why, th' an't a nigger nowhar smarter 'n I be when I'm stiddy! Went down Horne Neck t' odder day, stiddy as a jedge; cradled the hull o' Great Lot, and one acre besides in Little Lot, and had it all done by half past 'leven. Mr. Smith, the oversee', come down, and he was so s'prised, it like to took away his breaif! Says he, 'Edinburgh!' says he, 'I could n't 'a' believed it,' says he; 'you 're the smartest hand I got.' And so I be. Dunno what I *could n't* do, if it warn't fer gittin' a *leetle* mite out the way now and den. It takes time, ye see. Dat 's why I could n't go 'long with Mars' Clayty and Colonel Barton. Mars' Clayty must n't feel hard on me; Mis Ma' must 'member my 'spects to him when she goes back, and to de old Gin'ral, too. I allers thinks so much o' my own folks. But 'bout dat 'ere pay-party; I was gwine fer to hev beans and bacon; would Miss Ma' hev beans and bacon?"

"That would be a very substantial dish."

"So I tell Marty, and Mother Honner; my, she's high on beans and bacon! Miss Ma' ben to see Mother Honner, yit?"

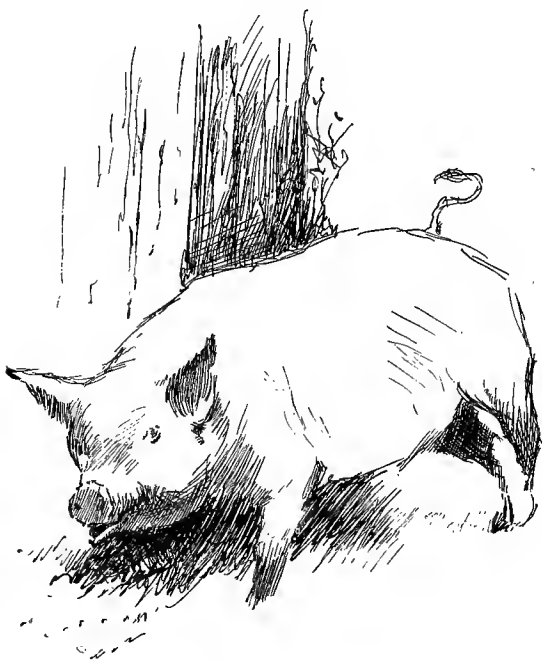
"No; I only came last night, Ed."

"Be sure! so Miss Ma' did! Den ye

an't seen him yit, nor ye an't heerd him,
and ye won't hear him when ye do go!"

"Hear whom, Ed?"

"Why, de hawg, Miss Ma'! Mother



Honner's hawg! She's got de enligthend-
est hawg dat ever was raised on de West

Shore ! Same as a watch-dog, he is. Ef he hears suffin' comin' by de woods or 'cross de swamp, Lor', he'll grunt and grunt till de fambly 's all roused up. Never grunts at de quality. When Mars' Lennie comes dat way, or Mis' Calvert 's takin' de air, he lies down quiet and 'spectable, wid his nose in de straw, like a hawg oughter ; but when dem Squaw Neck niggers comes round, he'll snuff 'em half a mile off, and 'pears like he'd grunt hisself to pieces ! Never grunts at de quality. Ef he did, I'd cut him ober myself ! I won't take no disrespects for my folks ! I think a heap o' my folks, Miss Ma' ; think a heap o' Mars' Clayty and o' Miss Ma', too, and Mars' Lennie and Mis' Calvert and Mis' Calvert's chillen. Ben a-tryin' to move away sommers, but don't 'pear to make up my mind to leave 'em. Thought mebbe I'd git higher wages ; roof leaks like a riddle, too ; wants shinglin' ; that 's what Marty's gwine to hev that party fer. Think the folks would like some plums, Miss Ma' ? I'd kind o' sot my mind on gwine plummin' the day afore the party. Ef it 's putty soon, I'll go plummin' fer blueberries ; and ef it 's bumbye, I'll go plummin' fer high-briers. Miss Ma' like high-briers ? ”

"Very much."

"Gwine to pick her a peck some day ; a peck of wild strawberries, too."

"Those are past, Ed ; there won't be any till another year."

"Want ter know ! an't that too bad ! Wal, the fust kind o' broken day I git, I'll go high-brierin' for Miss Ma'. Don't bodder Miss Ma' a-talkin', do I ?"

"Not at all."

"If I an't bodderin' ye, will ye gib me some 'vice 'bout that ere pay-party, Miss Ma' ?"

"Certainly."

"Wal, the way I meant to write my letter was to 'vite 'em to a sail, and then buy a sheep, and whilst they'se a-cruisin' round on de bay me and Mother Honner'll roast the sheep and git the table sot out. Marty must go 'long, too, and fetch de chillen, Marty must ; she's a good gal, and she works smart. I married her up to 'Napolis, gwine on six year ago. She used to work to Mis' Judge Nottingham's when I was to de old Gin'al's. De way we got acquainted, Miss Ma', was dis 'ere way. I was a-gwine fer to see" — but just here a soft voice called Ed from the corner of

the house nearest the kitchen, and Ed obediently uncoiled himself. "I reckon Marty wants me to hist on dat 'ere big dinner-pot," he said, "but Miss Ma' 's so kind, I 'll come up ag'in, and git her 'vice 'bout dat pay-party."

It was true that Ed had tried more than once to move away from the old place, and had failed. Others had tried it, too. Cæsar moved away one week, and moved back the next. Pomp had tried it. Ben, the surliest, sulkiest fellow on the whole place, had tried it, and was successful; indeed, eminently successful, for he moved away seven times, and at last gave it up as an aimless excursion, and settled down in the spot where he was born.

There was something more than mere



love of home in the spell that brought them all back ; there was an undying power that never loses its hold on those, either high or low, who have once become its bondmen. Poets sing and orators discourse of the love which the mountaineer feels for his upland home ; but it is a languid emotion compared with the passionate attachment cherished for their birth-place by those who are born on the shores of the ocean, or of its vast estuaries. Mysterious influences are welded into heart and brain, and bone and fibre. Destiny may carry them to other scenes and carve for them brilliant careers, but nothing ever seems to them so fair and desirable as the old life by the sea. Fortune may smile upon them, and Fame sing to them with her siren tongue, and they shut their eyes and ears to all, to brood over fond memories of that enchanting spot to which they will fly when the chance opens, again and again and again. The world is everywhere, but the earthly Paradise only there. In health the hunger is great enough, but in sickness it becomes a famine, known only to the sea's own children. They turn from every comfort and luxury that

can be given, to long with a wordless, inexpressible longing that devours their very hearts — an inexorable, unappeasable longing — for one sight of the sapphire sea, one sound of its deep-mouthed, motherly murmur, one breath of its heavenly salt-ness ; till, lacking these, they feel in their wild homesickness that they might better turn their face to the wall and die.

The well-disciplined, church-going, average Marylander desires to live in peace and gentleness with all mankind ! but ah me ! the strain and tug on every moral fibre, when certain well-meaning persons, with froward hearts and darkened eyes, come down to our beatific old West Shore once in a while, and, looking about in a lofty manner, pronounce it deplorably flat ! Flat, say they ? We want it flat. We love it flat. We praise the Creator for having made it flat. To be flat means to be fresh, free, adorable, wide-eyed, large-lunged ; it means a vast range of vision from one far-off, limitless horizon to another ; it means a blue, unbroken dome of heaven, with no officious projections lifting up presumptuous heads against its serene majesty. But they are more to be pitied

than blamed, poor things ! they deserve tender commiseration ; they have been born in strong cities, in family prisons twenty-five feet by sixty, or in far-away land-locked depressions, still more remote and slow, and they know nothing of the freedom and the fascinations of our rare, amphibious life. They have not wandered countless times in among the odorous pines, and thrown themselves on the slippery matting of discarded needles beneath them, while the wind sung its faint, unearthly song above, and the cadences came filtering down through myriad leafy wires, mere sprays, at last, of quivering intonations. They have not waded and plashed in those wonderful, limpid brooks, whose crumpled crystal stream ripples on over sand and pebble and floating weed till it reaches an armlet of the sea, where the tide sends volumes of salt water up into its freshness, while the brook rolls back floods of sweet water into the brine ; a mile or two up, speckled trout asleep in cool pools, or glinting among the water-cresses ; a mile or two down, shoals of salt-water minnows, darting through thickets of eel-grass.

But our poor people had far more prac-

tical reasons than any of these for liking to live where they did. That which "makes the pot boil" lay in profusion, dry and brittle, on the ground of the oak and pine woods, and that which alone can give the boiling a satisfactory result was to be had in plenty by all except those who were absolutely too lazy to pick up their food. They could set their nets in deep water and catch as many fish as they chose; or paddle up the creeks and stake their eel-pots to secure a haul next morning; or, for quicker effects, spear the eels in the mud at night by torchlight. If they wanted clams, they needed only to run out upon the flats with their spade and basket when the tide was out; and if they desired oysters, the beds were prolific and the rakes in the boats. Then there were crabs to scoop and ducks to shoot, and always, besides, the enchanting possibility of catching a "torop;" for by this contumelious name do they designate that portly, aldermanic personage who presides at lord-mayor's feasts and other destructive pageants.

These sea-turtle, at certain seasons, come clawing clumsily up the margins of the

sandy coves to lay their eggs on the shore, and go blundering back again without further parental inquietude, superbly indifferent as to whether the sun hatches them or not.

One of these rare prizes had fallen into Ed's lucky hands a day or two before his interview with cousin Mary, and he would certainly have arrived eventually at the narration of the grand affair, if Marty's wifely repression had not nipped him untimely. He had seized the ungainly creature as it was returning to the water, and its tortuous track led him back to the newly made hollow in the sand where it had concealed its quantity of ugly eggs. Ed put it in a crawl sunk on the edge of the creek, hoping to save it till the momentous party should take place, when it would properly figure as the prime feature of the *fête*; and the eggs were carefully covered with an armful of wet sea-weed, to keep all vivifying sunbeams from taking even a peep at them; for nectar and ambrosia are less delectable in some people's eyes than the contents of those vellum sacks. Ed and Sammy made delightful diurnal excursions to the crawl; they

pulled out the turtle and poked it about the head to make it snap its jaws together in rage, turned it over on its back to see its flippers work, and lifted it cautiously back again by its short, horny tail, — a happy provision of Nature for handling the cross-grained creature. Then they opened the sand and counted their treasure of eggs, and, covering them up wet and fresh, went blissfully back to Marty to tell her how beautiful it all was, and what a red-hot temper the old torop had.

It was close upon midsummer now, and the long-desired party seemed no nearer than at first, for Aunt Dolly was down with the chills, and Marty making up the deficiency by working every day at the house. But one Friday night at dusk, when the last plate was washed and put away, and Marty was slowly wiping the soap-suds from her tired hands, there came a flying scout through the twilight, dispatched from Hannah's in hot haste, with momentous information.

But the news was too prostrating to be borne alone; even by all-enduring Marty, and she came softly tapping at mother's door.

"Mis' Calvert's gwine to be surprised now, I reckon," she said, very gently, "fer I'm beat myself, — the beatest I ever was yit. They 'se come."

"Who has come?" asked mother.

"All on 'em; all my pay-party, that I was gwine to have along towards fall," rejoined Marty, placidly. "Said they heerd 't was gwine to be to-night, and we hain't gin out, nor nothin'."

"They should not have come without a definite invitation," said mother, rather indignantly. "They must go home again."

"Yas'm. Mother Honner let 'em know we had n't no notion of havin' it; but they said they heerd it was to be, and they could n't come so fur fer nothin', and we'd got to have it whedder or no. There's a big wagon-load chock full, from Tuckap-poops, and they say they left the Squaw Neck folks walkin' over, 'bout half a mile back."

"How could they possibly hear such a thing, Marty?"

"Wal, they knew we was gwine to have it some time or 'nother, when things got settled, and I reckon Ed must 'a' ben talkin' about that torop; he sets 'mazin' by

it, and Mis' Calvert knows Ed's such a pleasant boy to talk, 'specially when he's a little out of the way."

"Very well," said mother in righteous wrath, "let him exercise his gift to-night, then, and amuse his company. They have chosen to come without an invitation; now let them stay without any entertainment, and go home as soon as they choose."

"Yas 'm. Mis' Calvert don't think that's kind of onsociable, eh, Mis' Calvert?"

Mother laughed in spite of herself. "I'm sure I don't know, Marty. Manage it yourself. What are you going to do?"

"Reckoned I'd ask Cæsar to take 'em out sailin' a couple of hours. Cæsar's a mortal clever boy, and them Tuckappoozers is dead sot on sailin'. Think 's likely they'll git aground comin' back. Tide'll be cl'ar down by that time. Ed can kill the torop, — I 'count it a 'mazin' marcy we got that torop, mistes, — and then row up to the store and git the goodies to set out and sell; and me and Ann and Mother Honner'll git 'em a good tea agin they come back. Mis' Calvert think that's a good way to fix it?"

"Yes, as good as 'can be, Marty; and now, how can I help you?"

"If Mis' Calvert felt willin' to have the big oven het up, and to sell me a little butter and flour and sugar, and that big dish of beans and bacon I got ready fer to-morrow, I 'd git along bitiful."

"Very well, Marty, I 'm quite willing."

So the materials were gathered together and weighed out ; the great oven was soon roaring with internal fires. Aunt Dolly, being in the debatable land between a fever and a chill, and much revived also with the prospect of a party, rose from her bed to make Marty a big batch of her famous soda biscuit and card gingerbread, and afterward went to the feast to help eat it. The willing guests were sent out sailing, and verified Marty's hopeful anticipations, for they ran aground on the south flat, coming into the cove, and were held fast till eleven o'clock or after, when the tide turned and set them afloat once more. What with poling round into the right position, dropping sail and heaving anchor, and leisurely landing a few at a time in the follow-boat, it was almost midnight when they reached the shore.

Here all things had gone on prosperously. The fire had promptly and duti-

fully begun to burn the stick, the stick had begun to heat the oven, the oven had begun to bake the cake and biscuit and beans and bacon; and all of these had come in the fullness of time to a beauteous brown, and had been carried to Mother Hannah's in the clothes - basket. There they adorned the table in company with the sumptuous turtle stew and minor comestibles, and sent savory smells into the contented nostrils of the hungry guests. Ed had returned in good season with his "store-nuts," candies, and root-beer, and sat behind his stand in the corner, pouring out his heart to the crowd with the most affectionate loquacity. Cæsar took the entrance-fee at the door, and the women served. After supper Ed and 'Lias furnished the music, and the dancing began. The baby had been early dosed with Godfrey's Cordial and stowed away in a basket in the loft; but long-suffering Sammy came to the party, as he had been promised, and sat up late and had goodies, till he rolled over with sleep and repletion, collapsed into a shapeless lump, and was finally hoisted into the loft with the baby and the other superfluous articles.



“Ed . . . pouring out his heart to the crowd.” Page 140.

It is not every day that the Tuckappoos and Squaw Neck people go to a party; it is not so frequent a pleasure that they can afford to let it slip too quickly through their fingers. A bird in the hand is enjoyed only so long as he remains there. So the moon sank away in the west, and the eternal stars shone calmly on, and the rosy, innocent dawn flushed up in the east and faded, and the kingly sun came regally up over the sea, and still wassail prevailed on the face of the earth.

Marty came wearily back to the house at late breakfast time, dragging the drowsy baby in her own tired arms, for Ed and Sammy were still accepting Mother Hannah's somewhat reluctant hospitality. Marty was exceedingly meek and silent that day, and once in a while big tears filled her patient eyes and rolled slowly down her cheeks. The day after a late party is apt to be an aching void, even for those who have the fun, and Marty's share of the affair had been only toil and weariness. She looked so forlorn toward evening that mother bade her go to bed and sleep off her fatigue.

"Don't 'pear to be sleepy, thank ye,

mistes," said Marty; "my head's so chuck full of them accounts. What we owe Mis' Calvert, and what we owe to the store, and what we borrowed of Mother Honner."

"How did the party go off, Marty?"

"Wal — it went off — yas 'm," said Marty.

"Did you make as much as you expected?"

Marty's lip trembled, and the tears dropped as she shook her head slowly.

"It's a kind o' s'cumventin' world, Mis' Calvert, don't Mis' Calvert think so? Ed an't much of a hand to sell things, Ed an't; he's such a pleasant boy. He gin away a sight o' goodies to the chillen, and the old folks, they hommered him down reel lively on his prices. Old Jed, he let the tongs fall right on to Mother Honner's big yaller puddin' dish, that sot on the hairth keeping the torop warm, and that'll be forty cents, I 'spect. And then countin' what we owe to the store, and what we owe Mis' Calvert" —

"Never mind that, Marty; let it go as my contribution toward the party."

"Wal, now, thank ye, Mis' Calvert! that h'ists a big weight off my mind! Mis'

Calvert's reel clever to us; she allers is; that makes things better; and now, if we don't have to pay more'n forty cents for the dish, and if Bruce and his wife pay us what they owe us,—did n't have no change last night,—and if Ruth Jake ever sends along the half-price for her fambly,—she said a widder with three chillen ought to git in free, all on 'em; she reckoned it warn't accordin' to Scriptor to take the widder's mite, but seein' 't was us, she 'd try to pay half-price bumbye when she sells her baskets,—and if there an't nothin' more broke than I know on, I reckon now, we 'll cl'ar one dollar and fifteen cents."

"Oh, Marty! poor child! I know how disappointed you are! Why, you've been thinking of this all summer!"

"I have so, mistes," responded Marty with deep humility, "but I 'spect it's the Lord's will. I allers was a ugly-tempered critter from when I was a baby. Mammy used to tell me I was the sassiest gal she had, and I'd got to git my sperit broke afore I died. So I 'spect it's the Lord's will, Mis' Calvert, for my heart *was sot* on to them shingles, powerful sot, and I'd

ben a-prayin' to him so much about 'em that I kind o' felt as if he'd noticed our roof hisself, and seen how much it wanted fixin'. Not that I want to fret, Mis' Calvert must n't think it — me, with so many marcies, such a clever mistes, and Ed such a pleasant boy, too. The frost and the snow are his'n; and if it's his will they should fall on our heads next winter the way they did last, why, I reckon we can stan' it, and next summer mebbe we'll try another pay-party and have better luck."

This was the melancholy end of Marty's long projected comedy, but there followed a little epilogue of a more cheerful nature.

Cousin Mary told the story of the pay-party in her witty little way, at a dinner given by the General soon after her return to Annapolis; and Colonel Barton proposed that all the guests who cared to partake of the fruit should deposit an equivalent in the fruit-basket for what they took out of it, for Marty's benefit. Unanimous approval followed his suggestion; every one was hungry for fruit and sorry for Marty, and Cousin Mary sent down to mother the next week a little fortune for her. There was enough to shingle the roof, enough to

buy the shoes, and a plump little nest-egg beside, for Marty to tie up in her handkerchief and hide under the pillow.

Marty's face was as the face of an angel when she received the good news. Her very eyes laughed through her tears. "It's the Lord's doin'," she said softly, "the Lord's own doin'! Thar he was a-con-trivin' and cunjurin' 'bout them shingles, while I misdoubted him! If I'd only stood fum to the faith, and not ben so uns'cum-cised in heart, I might 'a' knowed that however beat a poor critter feels, his marcy endureth forever."



